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The SOCIOLOGY of CHILD DEVELOPMENT

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THE SOCIOLOGY OF
CHILD DEVELOPMENT

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To Barbara and Constance

Contents

	PAGE
<i>Foreword</i>	ix
 PART I: <i>Introductory</i>	
I The Child in Contemporary Thought	3
II The Sociological Approach to Child Behavior	23
 PART II: <i>The Child and His Family Setting</i>	
III Family Structures and the Child	51
IV Family Process and the Child	73
V Interaction Between the Siblings	96
VI Family Culture and the Child	119
VII What the Child Gives the Parents	140
 PART III: <i>Facets of Family Life</i>	
VIII Family Table Talk	161
IX Family Modes of Expression	176
X The Bilingual Child	200
XI The Role of the Guest	221
XII Domestic Servants and Child Development	262
 PART IV: <i>Class and Status Differentials</i>	
XIII The Child and the Class Structure	283
XIV The Individual Child and His Status	311
 PART V: <i>Some Problem Families</i>	
XV Parents with Problem Attitudes	331
XVI Homes with Conflict Situations	350
XVII Families Under Stress	376

PART VI: *Child Development and Non-Family Groups*

XXVIII	Growing Out of the Family	409
XIX	Children Who Reject Their Parents	433
XX	School Situations and Child Development	459
XXI	The Role of the Peer Groups	493
XXII	The Larger Social Setting for Child Development	520
XXIII	War and Child Development	546

PART VII: *The Changing Status of Childhood*

XXIV	Children as a Population Element	583
XXV	The Historical Status of Childhood	598
XXVI	The Changing Status of Childhood in the United States	626
XXVII	The Child Welfare Movement	663
XXVIII	Emerging Rights of Childhood	692
XXIX	Child Development: Concluding Problems and Comments	728
	Bibliography	745
	Subject Index	779
	Index of Authors	783

Foreword

Childhood is a universal human experience. A book about child development is therefore a book about all of us. The factors and problems involved in this process of growing up may be considered from different points of view: in this book the approach is primarily sociological. Its chief emphasis is upon the social situations in which children live and grow from infancy to maturity. Since all of us grow up with other persons, these social situations, too, are a part of our common experience.

A book of this kind should be readable. I have tried to make it so. The number of footnote references has been limited, so far as seemed advisable. The bibliographical appendix includes only a selected number of related books and articles, which made it necessary to omit many valuable references. Also, I have tried to write in simple manner, and to avoid the use of technical terms. I hope that the esoteric will forgive this, and that other readers will like it.



I have received so much help in the preparation of this volume that my acknowledgements are almost certain to be inadequate. To Professors Ernest W. Burgess of the University of Chicago and Kingsley Davis of Princeton University, I am indebted for reading parts of the manuscript and for helpful suggestions. Professor F. Stuart Chapin, of the University of Minnesota, indicated additions to the original outline which have been included in its final form. Mrs. Frances C. Allen, of Philadelphia, contributed a revealing case study which is identified at the point of incorporation. Mr. Bradford Chambers has been most gracious in permitting me to examine his unpublished material on conflict gangs. Mrs. Eleanor S. Boll, Research Associate at the William T. Carter Foundation, has been a source of constant help. Specific contributions by her to the volume are noted on subsequent pages, but I am indebted

to her for much more than such acknowledgements will indicate. The facilities of the Carter Foundation for Child Helping at the University of Pennsylvania have been utilized at every turn, a debt which it is a pleasure to owe. Generous adjustments in my teaching responsibilities, made by the administrative officers of the University of Pennsylvania, have permitted the completion of the manuscript much earlier than would have been possible otherwise. The American Sociological Review, The American Journal of Sociology, The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, and The University of Pennsylvania Press have permitted the reproduction of material previously published by them. Finally, my two daughters have taught me so much about children that it seems only proper, for professional as well as for affectional reasons, to dedicate this volume to them.

James H. S. Bossard

Philadelphia, Penna.
March 15th, 1947

Part I.

Introductory

emphasized ameliorative measures. They have been referred to customarily as courses in child welfare.¹

In recent years, a newer approach to child study and problems has come to be made by social scientists, and sociology has shared in this development. This newer approach can be summarized most tersely, perhaps, by saying that the child is regarded as a focal concept for scientific study rather than as a welfare objective. In other words, the child is seen as a human reality in whose development are combined the various specialized problems of particular groups of scientific students. The child, in short, serves as a project study, drawn from life rather than from the laboratory, in which may be observed the various processes of human growth and development. To say, then, that the child emerges as a focal concept for scientific analysis does not imply an approach that is theoretical or academic, as the phrase might indicate, but an intensely practical one, especially for the purposes of sociological analysis and research. It makes the child's social development a distinctive and legitimate scientific area for sociologists, just as it has been for psychologists and psychiatrists.

SOCIOLOGY AND THE AREA OF CHILDHOOD

To think in terms of the realities of a functioning society, there are a number of reasons for sociologists to center much of their work around the child. Whether one begins from the point of view of group processes and analyzes them in terms of their simple beginnings, or whether he makes a lengthwise historical approach to the processes of personality formation and development, he is led in either event directly to the area of childhood. Some of the more obvious relationships between this area and the scope of contemporary sociological thought will be indicated in brief form.

The Sociological Conception of Personality.

Contemporary sociologists conceive of the human personality as a product of social conditioning. In this process, two sets of conditioning factors are recognized as of outstanding importance. One of these is the interactive experience of life within the group. Sociologists discuss this currently under the heading of "social interaction" or "the

¹ Cf. Raymond Kennedy and Ruby Jo Reeves Kennedy, "Sociology in American Colleges," *American Sociological Review*, October, 1942, pp. 661-675, for the relative importance of such courses.

role of the group." But the influence of relationships with other persons is modified or qualified constantly by what these other persons have learned, i.e., their cultural heritages. Thus we identify the second set of conditioning factors as cultural ones, comprehending the more or less accepted group ways of doing and thinking. These, of course, are sociological commonplaces today. They are recalled here because of their implications, not fully recognized as yet by many contemporary sociologists. Two of these implications are emphasized here. The first is the obvious fact that the social conditioning of the personality during the first years of life is of primary importance. Not only are the factors operating during this period the first to condition the individual, but there are few or no counterinfluences to overcome. All this is but another way of stating that the basic patterns of personality are laid during the period of childhood.

The second implication is that the sociological processes of personality formation can best be studied during the earlier stages. There are a number of reasons why this is so. The relative lack of counter and complicating factors has been referred to. There is a simplicity and directness about the process during the first years that is apt not to be duplicated later on. The process takes place on a smaller scale; the groups within which the child interacts and the culture-transmitting process operate on a smaller scale than is found in the later stages of life. Something akin to controlled conditions can be set up for children, an opportunity likely to be lacking when the subjects studied are older. In other words, the whole range of experimental studies in personality formation is confined in large measure to the area of child life.

In short, the social development of the personality is in large degree the story of the social development of the child. This is the inevitable implication of the sociological approach to personality—a conclusion similar to that of the psychiatrist and psychoanalyst. In this approach, the role of the family is predominant, and the family is the one institution whose scientific study falls most clearly within the province of the sociologist.

Cultural Continuities and Discontinuities.

Viewed in retrospect, the culture of any society is a changing stream in which cultural continuities and discontinuities are occurring constantly. The more precise study of these, in their varying aspects and respective roles, falls ordinarily within the province of the culture his-

torians and students of social processes. The point of emphasis here is that the child is the focal point of this recurring relationship between the cultures of successive generations.

Turning to cultural continuity, we see that the child is the carrier and connecting link between the cultures of succeeding generations. This is a fact of great importance; for, in terms of social process, it makes the relation of adult to child as important as, if not more so than, that of adult to adult. Groves has already emphasized this in these words: "When society is conceived as a functioning process, a continuing outgoing in a way suggestive of the individual consciousness which carries the past into the present and establishes purposes directed toward the future, it is certain that the relationship of adult with child has in this cultural flow a more pregnant meaning than the contact of adult with adult."²

Behavior Problems and the Socialization of the Child.

The longer the sociologists' concern with crime, delinquency, and behavior of all sorts continues, the more one comes to be disturbed by the suspicion that our past approach has been from the wrong direction. We have, in times past, started with problem cases and worked back to general processes, and we have selected picturesque and intriguing factors and attempted to assess their role; whereas all the time we might have started more intelligently with the child and studied the normal processes of his development, ultimately coming to an understanding of deviant behavior in social relationships. In the medical field, the study of disease follows and is built upon an understanding of bodily structure and process; a similar procedure in sociology would make the study of juvenile delinquency a postscript to the study of the socialization of the child.

Group Relations and the Child.

The sociology of child development is an important part of the science of group relations. Children are a definite population element. All societies recognize the distinctive existence of groups organized on an age basis. Anthropologists have shown the prevalence and import-

² Ernest R. Groves, *The Family and Its Social Functions*, J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia, 1940, p. 16.

ance of the age classificatory device in primitive cultures,³ and more recently sociologists have come to emphasize its role in contemporary society.⁴ The ascription of the child's status and the ways for the child and youth to achieve status—these are the heart of the class system of any society. The status of the child element in the population, the factors affecting its status, and its relationship to other population elements—these are a major part of the problem of group relations in sociology.

There are other and important phases of a sociology of childhood. The foregoing discussion is intended to be suggestive and illustrative rather than exhaustive. The essential fact to be emphasized is the child as a challenging pattern of operating actuality, thus making his social development a major area for scientific exploration and an intriguing project for pedagogical exploitation. For this is the stimulating challenge of the child as a scientific concept, that in it so many of the basic principles of sociology and of the unexplored problems of sociological research are combined into an operating pattern at a time in the life of the individual, and in a stage of simplified development, when they can be most readily understood.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE MODERN MIND

One of the driving forces toward an emphasis upon the sociological study of child problems is what may be called the philosophy of the modern mind. The essence of this philosophy is the belief, so characteristic of the industrial-urban American culture, that man can in large measure control his own destiny. The contemporary American worships at the shrine of progress, meaning by that concept a controlled development of society in a direction believed to be desirable. Supremely sure of himself, he deems himself the master of his fate, contends that he need not submit, and that there really is no virtue in continuing to submit, to the limitations imposed upon him by the forces of nature or

³ Ralph Linton, "Age and Sex Categories," *American Sociological Review*, October, 1942, pp. 589-604; and Ralph Linton, "A Neglected Aspect of Social Organization," *American Journal of Sociology*, May, 1940, pp. 870-887.

⁴ Leonard S. Cottrell, Jr., "The Adjustment of the Individual to His Age and Sex Roles," *American Sociological Review*, October, 1942, pp. 617-621; Talcott Parsons, "Age and Sex in the Social Structure of the United States," *ibid.*, pp. 604-617; Earl H. Bell, "Age Group Conflicts and Our Changing Culture," *Social Forces*, December, 1933, pp. 237-243.

the follies of man. To understand more clearly this characteristic philosophy, it is necessary to consider the background out of which it grew, how it took form, and what factors have been most influential in its development. Only by so doing can we realize its force and its depths. Thus clarified, its application to and implication for child study can be indicated and understood.

The Medieval Background.

America was colonized by medieval Europeans in revolt against the medievalism of Europe. Their unsettlement in the Old World led to their settlement in the New. While new ideas were in process of formation, old values continued to prevail. Men—the rank and file of them—are slow to cast off the accumulated ideas of the centuries. The immediate past of the pioneer Americans was after all medieval; and if in part they strained at their bondage to medieval culture, the form of the slowly crystallizing new ideas was dictated by what had been. What men rebel against determines the content of their rebellion.

The student of medieval history, analyzing a thousand years of European experience, ought to have no difficulty in understanding the philosophy which dominated that period. He will have surveyed the breakup of the earlier Roman state and the gradual deterioration of its civilization into the bleakness of the Dark Ages. First its deterioration, then the continuity of that condition, and ultimately its standardization in feudal society, stand out. Furthermore, the student will see churchmen dominating the thinking of that period. From the time of Boethius (*d.* 525) to that of Dante (*d.* 1321) there was not a single writer of renown in western Europe who was not a professional churchman.

Out of this background, and through such mediums, there developed a philosophy which discounted every hope for this world and centered all of them in the next. The world was going back, they said; nor was this of any consequence, for the earth was to be destroyed soon. There would be a new heaven and a new earth. Most of the early church fathers expected the speedy end of the world; and, as time denied their prophecies, the latter became not fewer in number or fainter in promise, but more indefinite as to time.

The lengthening delay in the fulfillment of this cosmic schedule led gradually to its acceptance as part of a divine plan. Religious faith, surveying an unhappy world and perplexed by its continuance, finally evolved the concept of providential guidance. In substance, this theory

conceived of the world as a huge stage in which the drama of human destiny was being enacted. The forces of good and evil were locked in dramatic struggle. In the way which dramas are wont to have, things look darker and darker for the forces of good as the play unfolds, but there is the blessed certainty that in the end these forces will emerge in glorious triumph. This theory, conceived originally in regard to the world as a whole, came to be interpreted subsequently by individuals and nations as applying specifically to themselves.

The Middle Ages, then, were the domain of stability, continuity, and mundane hopelessness. Ignorant of the processes of history, men allowed themselves to be governed by the unknown past; ignorant of science, they never believed in hidden forces working on to happier ends in this world. A sense of decay was upon them. Each generation seemed so inferior to the preceding in ancient wisdom and ancestral worship that men found comfort in the assurance that the end of the world was at hand. Time was, after all, but a dressing room for eternity.

What all this implied concerning the here and now was its static nature. The external, visible world was settled and secure; the occupations of men were defined, their duties were prescribed, their relative rank was fixed. One's privileges, one's duties, and one's future were deeply grooved in the mold of the established order. "Over the daily life," writes Mumford, "lay a whole tissue of meanings, derived from the Christian belief in eternity: the notion that existence was not a biological activity but a period of moral probation. . . ."⁵

The duty which this biworld arrangement enjoined upon mankind was equally distinct: it was one of passive acceptance. Wisdom and good citizenship combined to lead one across the earth like a monk in his cowl, looking neither to the left of rebellion nor to the right of orderly reconstruction—eyes always intent upon the distant goal. "The medieval culture lived in the dream of eternity."⁶

Gradual Emergence of a New Attitude.

The breakup of the European heritage of medieval culture was a gradual process. In the thirteenth century this culture was still intact; by the end of the seventeenth century it was well on its way to disintegration. Visual representations of it remained, to be sure, and

⁵ Lewis Mumford, *The Golden Days*, Boni and Liveright, New York, 1926, p. 13.

⁶ *Ibid.*

institutionalized forms survived; but the essential fact was that the mental outlook was changing.

These centuries may be characterized as a twilight period—a time of ferment, during which many new and fruitful influences were at work. Four of these may be mentioned briefly in passing. One was the increase of wealth in western Europe. This was of great importance; for, as it multiplied, “it displaced the hope of heaven with the lure of progress.”⁷ Second, the achievements of the Renaissance and post-Renaissance periods, material and other achievements, created for man a spirit of confidence in his own ability. The reward of doing a thing well is the capacity to do another and a bigger one. Third, the break with the past, involving the rejection of the unimpeachable authority of the ancient thinkers, had to come before men could face the future with confidence. This was an achievement of this transition period. Finally, there progressed, at first slowly and painfully and with strange reluctance, a scientific understanding of the universe. This not only shattered the beliefs of the past, but furnished an insight into processes which laid the foundation for man’s subsequent control of his material environment.

The new attitude or philosophy above referred to came to be formulated consciously by the French philosophers of the eighteenth century. Writes Turgot: “The total mass of the human race marches continually, though sometimes slowly, toward an ever increasing perfection.” Condorcet, his friend and biographer, who spent the last months of his life, under the shadow of the guillotine, in writing a history of human progress, refers in similar vein to “the human race, freed from its chains and marching with a firm tread on the road of truth and virtue and happiness.” Furthermore, his hope for the future was unlimited. “No bounds have been fixed to the improvement of the human faculties; the perfectibility of man is absolutely indefinite; the progress of this perfection, henceforth above the control of every power that would impede it, has no other limit than the duration of the globe upon which nature has placed us.” A cosmic schedule of increasing perfection there was; and what was most important and thrilling about it was that man had a share in it all, that he could manipulate that schedule—he could, if he would, accelerate and direct it.

⁷ William Durant, “Is Progress a Delusion?” *Harper’s Magazine*, October, 1936, p. 743.

THE AMERICAN PROOF OF THE PUDDING

During the centuries in which this philosophy was taking form and in the years since, almost the whole life of the American people has been a living proof of its essential soundness. Three outstanding phases of our history will be briefly analyzed with reference to their bearing on the philosophy of the modern mind.

The Colonizing Process.

The far-reaching revolutionary significance of the colonizing process itself in the formation of American values and ways of living has never perhaps been sufficiently explored. What it seems to have involved in general was this: that men and their families, thousands of them, came from an environment in which certain social habits had become fixed on the basis of their survival value, and entered a new environment in which these habits neither fitted nor had survival value. The inevitable result was their gradual rejection and displacement. The occupations of men might be settled, their privileges and duties prescribed, in the Old World; but these could be anything but settled and prescribed in a world so new and strangely different as that to which the American colonists came; the future might be hopeless in the Old World, but it was as bright as the morning sun in the New; the hopes of the Old World might have centered upon life in the world to come, but the colonists in the New managed quite nicely and comfortably as time went on in the here and now. So, for a while, the New England devout retained the old religious loyalties; but increasingly, even though their lip service continued, their thoughts seldom wandered far from the harvesting of their crops or their remunerative three-cornered trade with the West Indies and Virginia.

Decade after decade, American colonists and their descendants saw a world being remade before their eyes. Forests disappeared, native redmen and animals moved out, cultivated fields took form, houses were built and improved, towns grew, wealth increased, the population doubled every two decades and spread out over new territory. Upon the virgin continent that lay before them, upon its trees and rocks and fields, successive generations of colonial America carved what they willed.

At first, this man-made newness was one of the externals of life. It was their material culture which men had remade. As time passed,

however, changes crept subtly but inevitably into their values, ideas, points of view, and philosophy. Colonial Americans began, as time went on, to live in a mental world as far removed from that of Europe as their material environments were from each other. They broke with the static conceptions of the Old World before the Europeans did, and before they themselves realized what was happening. When, therefore, in the latter part of the eighteenth century advanced thinkers came forward to tell them that man could master his world and direct it toward "an ever increasing perfection," the American colonists knew that they were right. They had seen it happen.

Nor did this influence cease in the eighteenth century. Students of American history have been taught that the colonizing period came to an end before the Revolutionary War; and so it did in the sense of the coming of a large number of settlers to colonies of the Crown. But the colonizing process, as a social phenomenon, continued in this country until the opening years of the twentieth century; for what is the westward movement of the frontier during all the nineteenth century but the continuation, in a country now politically independent, of the social process of colonization? Modern students of the frontier have rightly emphasized its great historical role in that it has resulted, on its ever-advancing front, in the constant rebirth of civilization, a rebirth not only of its material features but of its spirit, its institutions, its laws—in other words, of what sociologists call its adaptive culture.

In summary, then, throughout their history until yesteryear, the American people have gone on remaking their world in the sense of opening up the continent to its expanding population; for three hundred years they have remade many features of their national life by way of accommodation to this constant expansion; for three centuries the philosophy that man could remake himself and his culture has been signally, dramatically demonstrated.

Political Revolution.

During the very years in the eighteenth century that the philosophers were restating the fundamental tenets of the western mind, events in the political realm offered striking proof of the soundness of their contentions. These events were destined to buttress mightily the creed of human control which the colonizing process had created through its transformation of the physical basis of society.

In western Europe as a whole, until toward the end of the eighteenth

century, the prevailing type of political arrangement was the absolute monarchy, even if the king by divine right had softened in places into the benevolent despot. Then, first in America in 1776 and later in France in 1789, changes in the political system occurred to which the term revolution is applied unhesitatingly. These changes are usually thought of as ushering in a new form of government—the democratic form, whose growth and expansion constitute the epic feature in the life of the modern world.

What was fundamental and of the greatest importance about these revolutions is that they were a change not merely in the personnel or the structure of government, but in its basic philosophy. The earlier conception of government which came into the eighteenth century with all the hallowed prestige of centuries of almost unquestioned acceptance was that of a divinely ordained institution, set up by an omniscient Providence and imposed from above, for the benefit of a populace whose passive acceptance of this arrangement was the essence of orthodox citizenship. Moreover, this Providence was thoughtful in that it selected, too, the personnel which ruled “by the Grace of God.”

The essence of the new philosophy as it crystallized during the eighteenth century was this: that government was a man-made institution existing on the basis of a social contract, functioning for the purpose of achieving certain ends of human well-being, and deriving such powers as it had (and these were by no means unlimited) from the consent of its subjects.

Men have inherent rights, contended the American Bill of Rights in 1775, of which they cannot be deprived. All power of government is vested in, and consequently derived from, the people. Government is instituted for the common benefit of the people; and when it is found inadequate to these purposes, a majority of the people have the “indefeasible right to reform, alter, and abolish it, in such manner as shall be judged most conducive to the public weal.”

Similarly runs that great charter of democracy, the Declaration of Independence:

We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights; that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its founda-

tion on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.

The political revolutions of the eighteenth century in France and the United States, together with their successors in other lands, and the continuing series of changes and adaptations that followed during the years since—these are man remaking his political world.

Industrial Change.

More striking, more intimately comprehensive, and more convincing proof of man's power to remake his world, however, came from the industrial world. Again during that same eventful second half of the eighteenth century, there began, first in England and later on the Continent and elsewhere, a series of transformations in the workaday life of mankind. We speak of these transformations as the Industrial Revolution; in retrospect, we see them as the inevitable result of the scientific revolution of the preceding era; in briefest substance, we summarize them as changes which substituted the machine for the hand of man, and the forces of nature for his brawn and that of domestic animals.

In its broader aspects, however, the Industrial Revolution was more than a revolution in the processes of industry. Because these processes had to be pursued under different surroundings, i.e., in factories gathered together in new manufacturing centers, and because its products were utilized in daily life, the Industrial Revolution resulted also in a revolution in the manner of living for millions of people. The exploitation of natural resources by the machine is the outstanding feature of the history of the past century and a half; the products of this process of exploitation constitute the basis of modern living.

The years customarily assigned to the Industrial Revolution in England cover the span from 1760 to 1830. Many persons, perhaps as a result of their school experience in studying the dates of its beginning and end, come to think of the Industrial Revolution as something which flourished and ended so many years ago. This is obviously incorrect. The nature of its machines and of the power that drives them, the products which it produces and the readjustments in the life of mankind which result—all have been a continuing process, and have proceeded with unbroken continuity down to the present time. What has varied through the succeeding decades has been not the fact but the rate of industrial change.

The initiation of these new industrial processes, as well as their continuing revision, has been the result primarily of the application of scientific methods and understanding to the business world. Although it is true that the first steps in the development of modern industry were taken by men of a practical bent who were ignorant of the refinements of scientific theory, it is equally true that these men proceeded in the spirit and on the basis of the scientific achievements of the preceding decades. For a time this dependence of industrial progress upon science continued without coordination of the contributions or agents of science. Here and there an inventor, enlightened by the advances in pure science, tinkered with their possible application to business problems; but for the most part, scientists worked in their remote laboratories while practical inventors experimented with the application of new insights to industrial processes, each keeping aloof from the other and, what is more striking, often disdainful of each other.

It was the Germans who were destined to point out the way to hitch plodding business to the star of science. Germany, it will be recalled, emerged as a unified nation comparatively recently. It was not until after 1870 that a united and revived Germany aggressively entered the marts of modern trade. Coming so late, this newly industrialized competitor found herself at somewhat of a disadvantage. And yet these were the years when German scientists were famous the world over. What happened in that country during the closing decades of the nineteenth century was as inevitable as it was logical: Germany organized her scientific resources in state industrial laboratories that dictated the material practicability of their tasks and made available the results of their efforts to German industry. The outcome of this development was in turn inevitable. By the opening years of the twentieth century, Germany was challenging the business supremacy of other nations. It is interesting to speculate on what would have been the course of history had she been content with her accelerated business success and for-gone visions of military grandeur.

What these developments in Germany made clear was not only the relationship between scientific advance and business progress, but also how the latter could be accelerated by consciously organizing the resources of science and directing them toward technological improvement. Business in the United States was particularly quick to sense both of these points and to act upon them. But in this country it was

not in state-organized industrial laboratories that these principles were applied, but in the research departments of big business units. Big business in the United States saw in scientific research a method of business pioneering which could be of great advantage in competition both with other business units and with other industrial products. Thus it has come about that scientific research departments constitute an integral part of all large business units in this country; that private industry is now spending more than a hundred million dollars a year on such research; and that revolutions in industry are being effected, through the application of scientific methods to its problems and projects, with a speed and over an area that make the developments of a century ago seem puny indeed. (Incidentally, it was only a century ago that the abolition of the United States Patent Office was recommended on the ground that all the patents that could conceivably be needed had already been granted.)

Scientific research is the modern form of business pioneering. Many new industries have resulted from the advance in our scientific knowledge and its application to the modern world. Two illustrations will suffice. One is the development of the electrical industry. A laboratory experiment by Oersted disclosed the relationship between electricity and magnetism, for he observed that an electric current deflected the needle of a compass. Later, another laboratory experiment by Faraday proved that a moving magnet can generate a current. Out of these basic contributions to our scientific knowledge have grown our electrical industries, with a book value of more than twenty billion dollars and the availability, at trivial cost, of the equivalent of sixty manpower of energy for every man, woman, and child in the United States. Another illustration of the creation of an industry by scientific research is the rayon silk business. Nonexistent twenty-five years ago, this industry, producing goods to a value of more than \$150,000,000 a year, owes its being to the curiosity of men of science who wanted to know why a silkworm could make silk and man could not.

The foregoing reference to an industrial revolution during the past century and a half was made because of its effects upon public attitudes and beliefs. Our continuing experience with industrial development tends to drive home repeatedly and in most dramatic fashion the following four ideas: (1) that change in industry is continuous, and often occurs at an inordinate rate, (2) that these changes result from the advance of scientific knowledge; (3) that to understand some-

thing is to be able to change it as we wish; and (4) that revolution in one's daily life, as a result of these industrial changes, is inevitable.

Put in the simplest form, what a century and a half of experience with industrial change has done to the mind of modern man is to accustom him to expect miracles. He thinks there is no limit to what the "experts" can do. If, for example, the American Telephone and Telegraph Company were to announce today the perfection of an instrument the size of a fountain pen, as easy to carry, and as cheap to buy, which could be utilized, by simply putting it to one's mouth, to speak to any person in any part of the world, our contemporary public would raise its eyebrows a bit, read all about it in the newspapers and news weeklies, and then sit back with an air of. "Well, I've been wondering when those experts would get around to that."

In summary, what the preceding analysis has hoped to make clear is this: Three hundred years of continuous experience has made us the most confident and optimistic people in the world. We believe we can go to Heaven because, metaphorically speaking, for several centuries we have been doing so. We have occupied, exploited, and remade a very large and a very rich continent. As that process has gone on, civilization has repeatedly been reborn on its advancing frontier. The political philosophy which initiated our separate existence revolutionized the political tenets and structures of much of the world. Our own political ideas and forms have been repeatedly recast, always with the fond belief that the latest revision would just about usher in the millennium. Our industrial history is a dazzling record of miracles. What, in view of all this, could the philosophy of the American mind be but what it is? How else could we proceed but in our confident roistering fashion?

The implications of such a philosophy for children are obvious. If society is to control and direct its development—call the process social planning, postwar reconstruction, or what you will—then the place to begin is with the oncoming generation. The remaking of the world can never hold much point or hope of reasonable success if it is conceived in terms of the immediate present. It is essentially a process of trading in social futures, if the terminology of the market is permitted. Controlled and directed social movement implies a forward-looking philosophy with its eyes and its values focused on the future. And the future is the child. The child is the hostage which each generation gives to destiny, as a token of its behavior and its hopes.

THE PLASTICITY OF HUMAN NATURE

A second basic factor profoundly influencing contemporary thought in regard to the child has been the widespread acceptance of the idea of the plasticity of human nature. This idea, or principle, is the product of recent work in a number of sciences—principally psychology, anthropology, and sociology—and it is significant that the unorganized and originally unrelated efforts in these sciences have fitted together so aptly into the same pattern of conclusion.

One group of studies has emphasized the modifiability of human nature, how from the very beginning of life the original responses are modified by the particular requirements of the group in which the child lives. Moreover, this is a continuing process. Responses to stimuli in the environment are constantly in the process of formation and modification. Reinforcing these conclusions are the results of the accumulated material from anthropological sources revealing the diversity of group ways of living and thinking, i.e., the variety of cultural patterns into which children are born and by which they are conditioned. These studies have in turn been supplemented by the work of the sociologists, showing the relationship between culture and personality in a degree which led them to speak of personality as the subjective side of culture. In other words, modern scholarship has made it very apparent that everywhere throughout the world individuals are constantly being modified and conditioned for participation in their culture, that cultural unities vary from one group to another, as do the methods of cultural conditioning or the role of the respective agencies and persons who do the conditioning.

This principle, now an accepted foundation stone in the social sciences, is a revolutionary concept, once one turns to its implementation. It brings to the forefront, first and foremost, the whole process of child rearing and training, in both its individual and collective aspects. The meaning of education now comes to be reinterpreted to include the whole process whereby the child is inducted into his culture, i.e., the whole transformation of the newborn infant into membership in a specific society with a specific culture. It comes to include, too, the transmission of the cultural heritage from one generation to another, and the process by which a society perpetuates and renews itself.⁸

⁸ For a complete exposition of this point of view, read John Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1916; and collected papers in the *American Journal of Sociology*, May, 1943.

Part of this comprehensive process has as its purpose that which education, particularly in its more formalized aspects, has always sought to do, i.e., to maintain the cultural continuities between successive generations by inducting the child smoothly and unquestioningly into the cultural *status quo*. Primitive education is primarily of this kind, as was that of the Middle Ages and as is apt to be the case in most static societies. In a changing society, however, and particularly in one characterized by social stratification, this same conception of education now leads to its becoming a mechanism of social change by turning the process into one of changing the status and of promoting cultural discontinuities. The emphasis is still upon learning, let it be made clear; but its purpose is not primarily to groove the existing culture, but to alter status or to prevent the relative loss of status because of failure to learn. This emphasis becomes particularly marked in a society in which there is considerable vertical mobility, in which social standards are changing, or in which large groups of new entrants, such as immigrant groups, who come into the culture at a prescribed level, seek to improve their relative position. Thus it is that in modern America education "includes a heavy emphasis upon the function of education to create discontinuities—to turn the child of the peasant into a clerk, of the farmer into a lawyer, of the Italian immigrant into an American, of the illiterate into the literate."⁹ Through the mechanisms of adult education, missionary efforts, colonizing experiments, and Americanization classes, this process has been applied successfully to adults as well as to children. This, as Mead points out, changes the educational process from one of growth, as conceived of with children, to one of manipulated change in which the emphasis is primarily in terms of what is done to people rather than what they do.

It is interesting to bear in mind the differing attitudes toward this process, and the names applied to it, as one passes from approval to disapproval of its content and purposes. When one approves, the process is described as progress, Americanization, democratization, assimilation, colonization, and conversion. On the other hand, prior to the outbreak of World War II, the term indoctrination came to be used to characterize the process when one disagreed with its content and objective. The most outstanding illustration of this latter development was to be found, of course, in the totalitarian nations during the pre-

⁹ Margaret Mead, "Our Educational Emphasis in Primitive Perspective," *American Journal of Sociology*, May, 1943, p. 637.

war decade. Here there was a conscious, comprehensive, and systematic program, conceived by the heads of the state and backed by the resources of the state, to mold the child into a very specific type of personality so that he might serve as a part or cog in a vast human mechanism subjected to the centralized control of the totalitarian party in power. After the outbreak of the war, the term indoctrination came into more respectable use, particularly with the indoctrination training courses in various branches of the public service.

While it is still too early to describe and assess World War II training courses, it may be said in general that they not only have repeated the personality transformations of our peacetime experience, but have done so more effectively and more quickly. Wartime training wrought miracles, not only in the physical appearance but in the social personality and values of its trainees. Perhaps nowhere was this to be seen more clearly than in the picked personnel that went into our aviation service. It might take nine months of effort and cost in excess of \$25,000 to train a bombing pilot, but in most cases the transformation wrought in these men was nothing short of phenomenal.

Underlying all these developments of peace and war, in totalitarian and in democratic societies, is the same basic concept—the conscious reconstruction of the human person. So striking have been its manifestations that there has grown up in recent years, in both popular and scientific circles, a belief in the power of education, broadly conceived in cultural terms, to perform miracles. Just as the idea has come to prevail that there are no limits to the miracles which technologists can perform in our material culture, so prevails the idea that man can be conditioned to be what you will. It is beside the point to refer to the naïve interpretations that many persons give this belief, or to ridicule the overconfidence that exists in regard to its universality, or the oversimplification of its possibilities. The fact of the matter is that most of our contemporary thought, from the advertisement of the beauty parlor to the office of strategic war services, implies the possibility of “changing human nature.”

Our hopes have gone beyond this to the reconstruction of the social order. From building new personalities it is but a step to building new worlds. Lawrence Frank expresses this point of view in these words: “The kind and degree of social order arises from the personality-character structure of individuals making up that social group. It is evident,

then, that the possibility of improving human life and achieving some more humanly desirable and valuable social order rests upon our ability to modify personality development in the growing child and to reconstruct our traditional culture toward more desirable patterns. The democratic aspiration toward the conservation of the individual waits upon the development of methods for recognizing and fostering individuals as personalities capable of participating in a democratic society."¹⁰

Whether these contemporary convictions prove ultimately to be merely airy dreams in the realms of delusive grandeur, or the sterner stuff out of which better human beings and better worlds are destined to come, it must be clear that in all these efforts the child is the major objective; and an understanding of the child—his personality development, his socialization, his role as carrier of the culture, his cultural induction and his indoctrination—is the enduring basis of any possible successful achievement. The modern mind, wrestling with the problems of human and social well-being, finds them where Plato dreamed his ideal state—in the directed development of the next generation. Science now dictates what our tender sympathies long have counseled. Society's "acre of diamonds" lies revealed in the cradle within the home, and social statesmanship finds its task in the rearing of the child.

SUMMARY

In this chapter an attempt has been made to clarify the place of the child, and particularly of child study, in our contemporary thought. The main ideas which have been developed are restated in summary form.

1. The child came to the serious attention of the modern world as a welfare objective. In recent years, the emphasis in our thinking has changed the child into a scientific concept. The child, in short, has become a project study, drawn from life rather than from the laboratory, in which the processes of human growth and development may be observed and studied.

2. Modern man deems himself the master of his fate, capable of directing the controlled development of the society in which he lives.

¹⁰ Lawrence F. Frank, "Research in Child Psychology: History and Prospect," in Roger G. Barker, Jacob S. Kounin, and Herbert F. Wright, *Child Behavior and Development*, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., New York, 1943, p. 13.

This philosophy is deeply embedded in the American mind because it is a product of our collective experience over several centuries of national, political, and material life. Such a philosophy naturally sees the oncoming generation as the field of its special attention and effort.

3. A second basic factor profoundly influencing contemporary thought in regard to the child has been the widespread acceptance of the idea of the plasticity of human nature. This concept brings to the forefront the whole process of child rearing and education because these now become the basis of all hope of reconstructing personality and achieving some more desirable social order.

The Sociological Approach to Child Behavior



The first part of this book deals with the social development of the child's behavior. The emphasis is upon a sociological approach to behavior. This does not mean that other approaches, such as the biological, psychological, psychiatric or psychoanalytic, are not important. They are highly important, to be sure; but they are the essence of other scientific disciplines. This volume is limited to an approach distinctly sociological, and it is the particular purpose of this chapter to explain the meaning of this approach.

THE RISE AND MEANING OF THE TERM BEHAVIOR

The word behavior has had a long history, in the course of which it has been given a variety of shades of meaning. One time-honored usage has been a general one, to comprehend a way of acting, both of persons and of things. Thus one spoke of the behavior of a ship at sea, or of an animal in search of food, or of a child engaged in play. At other times, the word has been used more pointedly to refer to deportment, or etiquette, or the propriety of conduct, i.e., to a specific manner of acting in particular cases or circumstances.

It was first used in the scientific field several decades ago when some zoologists, comparative psychologists, and others developed a specialized interest in studying "those visible movements of the animal organism which constitute the external physiological processes." These studies came to be grouped together under the phrase, "the science of animal behavior."¹

¹ Maurice Parmelee, *The Science of Human Behavior*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1913, chap. 1.

Meanwhile, similar ideas of procedure were being entertained in the sciences that deal with human life and relationships. As early as 1897, Dr. Edgar A. Singer, now Professor of Philosophy at the University of Pennsylvania, read a paper before the American Psychological Society on "Sensation and the Datum of Science" in which he anticipated the objective point of view of the later behaviorists.² This point of view was developed more fully by Singer in his papers on "Mind as an Observable Object," read before the 1910 and 1911 meetings of the American Philosophical Association.³

It was an insurgent school in psychology, however, that launched the term behavior on its scientific way in the human sciences. This school made its appearance about 1912. It arose, on the one hand, as a revolt against the older introspective psychology, which contended that the starting point in mental analysis was the study of one's own mind in terms of mental states such as "sensations," "images," and "affective tones." On the positive side, this new school insisted that the proper start was the study of what other persons did. The observation of human action, rather than the analysis of consciousness, was the essence of a scientific psychology. This school came to be known as the behavioristic school.⁴

Beginning as a sort of side show among the academic psychologists, the behavioristic school developed, in the following decades, to the proportions of an intellectual revolution, carrying implications far beyond its original scope. We are concerned here, however, not with the premises of this school or their reception by students of human activities, but rather with the incidental by-product of the increasing use of the term behavior in these several sciences.

Within the past three decades, the word behavior has come to be recognized as a scientific term in a number of academic disciplines which are concerned with the study of what men do, and why. In its broadest sense, it has come to comprehend the entire response or adjustment pattern of the individual. Students prefer it to the earlier term conduct, because the latter seems to have certain ethical connota-

² Cf. *Philosophical Review*, September, 1898, pp. 487 ff.

³ Edgar A. Singer, *Mind as Behavior*, R. G. Adams and Co., Columbus, Ohio, 1924, chaps. 1, 2, 3.

⁴ John B. Watson, *Psychology from the Standpoint of a Behaviorist*, J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia, 1919

tions implying a judgment for which praise or punishment may be meted out.⁵

THE STUDY OF HUMAN BEHAVIOR

Human behavior is a fascinating field for study. Understanding it has always intrigued human interest. Through the ages, man has observed the conduct of his fellows and utilized his generalizations as a guide for his experience. Thus must one interpret the fables, legends, myths, proverbs, sagas, sacred writings, literary tales, etc., which constitute the accumulated wisdom of the ages; they involved and reflected man's observations on what people did, and why. And this is the substance of human behavior.

With the passage of time, such observations grew in range and complexity; with the advent of writing and printing, they came to be recorded; with the growth of human learning, they became naturally more specialized. These developments coincided in point of time with the use of the modern sciences. The result was a natural one, no matter how slowly the logic of thought might move to its destined end; the study of human behavior came to be recognized as a legitimate field of scientific study. The point to be recognized (and it seems important by way of proper perspective) is that the modern sciences concentrating upon the problems of human behavior represent, then, so many current phases of man's abiding and age-old aspiration to understand his fellows and ultimately himself.

The scientific study of behavior did not begin as such. That is to say, there was no conscious recognition among the early scientists of the scope of the study of human behavior as a whole. The period of beginning was one of specialized sciences attacking some one particular field or group of problems involving human reactions, often working independently of other sciences in related fields, and at times having no appreciation of such relationships or of the larger implications of their work. Each of these specialized sciences staked off its own claim, as it were; developed its own tools and techniques; and, in course of time, arrived at its own conclusions. It is only in recent decades that an appreciation of the underlying field of human behavior has been recognized as the common core of these sciences.

⁵ Cf. Robert Park and Ernest W. Burgess, *Introduction to the Science of Sociology*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1921, pp. 185-189.

Obviously, the objective study of human behavior is not the monopoly of any one scientific group. The question may be raised with pertinence whether it is a science in a fundamental primary sense, or a sort of hybrid product of various sciences. The conclusion urged here is that it is a science in the sense that it is a systematic, objective study of a definite field, but that to its development many separate disciplines must of necessity contribute.

The foundation sciences naturally are the physical and biological ones. As a basis for the study of human behavior, "there is," says Adrian, "a mass of information about the mechanism of the body. The behavior of any animal must depend in part on its general structure—its shape, size, number of limbs, arrangement of sense organs, etc., and with man there are the important structural modifications which allow the forelimbs to be used for wielding tools."⁶

Beyond anatomical structure are the physiological studies of the processes involved. In addition to the older orthodox studies, there are the contributions of endocrinology, with its growing body of information about the hormones, "those chemical messengers produced by that specialized group of tissues known as the ductless glands," which play such an essential role in the maintenance of normal bodily functions.⁷ In fact, there is much reason to think that there is a biochemical basis of life, both more specific and more important than has generally been supposed. The hope of a chemical psychology is not without foundation in fact.⁸ Certainly the chemistry of the body is not the same in different persons, and it is not unreasonable to suppose that these differences will influence people's reactions to life's experiences. Furthermore, there is the relation of the visceral organs to behavior, as stressed by Kempf.⁹

Every human being commences existence as a single living cell which contains all the possibilities and limitations of heredity. Just how specific and rigid these are is a matter of dispute, but enough is known to convince us of the existence of individual differences in constitutional capacities and of their transmission in accordance with the laws of

⁶ Edgar Douglas Adrian, in *Factors Determining Human Behavior*, Harvard Tercentenary Publications, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1937, p. 4.

⁷ James B. Collip, in *ibid.*, p. 12. See also R. G. Hoskins, *The Tides of Life*, W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., New York, 1933.

⁸ J. Needham, "Lucretius Redivivus," *Psyche*, 1927, pp. 10-13.

⁹ E. J. Kempf, *The Autonomic Functions and the Personality*, Nervous and Mental Disease Monograph Series, Washington, 1918.

heredity. Concerning the relative importance of the factor of heredity there is today no substantial agreement. The winds of academic opinion shift from time to time; and if certain emphases in this country tend at present to depreciate the importance of heredity, it is well to remember that this has not been the case recently among European scholars, nor has it always been true here. At any rate, the biological sciences have much to contribute to the understanding of human behavior, not only for the light they can throw upon the hereditary factor, but also, as Groves has pointed out, in their emphasis that behavior is the result of adjustment to environment.¹⁰

The psychological sciences have always occupied a central position in the studies of human behavior. The plural number is used because there are different approaches to the behavior of man which come properly within the scope of psychology, just as there are many systems of psychology. The scientific study of the child, from the psychological side, has been made in large measure via the psychometric approach, concerning itself with studies of capacity and thinking of behavior as a correlate or function.¹¹ Another group of psychologists have made what might be called the personality-testing approach. Their studies grew out of an interest in the correlation between intelligence and performance (i.e., behavior). The discovery that this correlation was not high led to an emphasis upon other traits and factors, such as temperament, character, etc. The number and variety of these studies may be deduced from the compilation made by May and Hartshorne.¹² Psychiatry may be included as one of the psychological approaches, even though it began as a branch of medicine. Concerned originally with the clinical treatment of the physiological causes of mental disorder, psychiatry represents today a framework of reference for behavior as a whole, with a variety of interpretations in sociopsychological terms and factors. The contemporary psychiatric point of view of mental disturbance as a failure of the organism as a whole to adapt to the conditions of life can have no other meaning but that psychiatry becomes an applied science (or an art?) of human behavior. Similarly,

¹⁰ Ernest Groves, *Personality and Social Adjustment*, Longmans, Green & Company, Inc., New York, rev. ed., 1936.

¹¹ W. I. and Dorothy S. Thomas, *The Child in America*, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., New York, 1928, chap. 8.

¹² Mark A. May and H. Hartshorne, "Personality and Character Tests," *Psychological Bulletin*, July, 1926, pp. 395-411.

one must include psychoanalysis in the psychological group. Like psychiatry, it began as a specialized therapeutic approach. As time has gone on, it too has become increasingly a study of the human personality, contributing concepts, emphases, and techniques, as well as conclusions distinctly its own.¹³

Finally, there are the social sciences, which have turned increasingly in the past few decades to the study of human behavior. It is easy to understand the reasons for this development. In the first place, much of the work of the groups of sciences already mentioned has reached into, or has implications for, the social sciences; in the second place, the more one delves into the study of behavior, the more one sees that it is something which develops in relation to and with other people. Human personality is a product of social contact and communication, and its scientific study leads directly and inevitably into the field of social interaction. It is, then, to the analysis of this social approach to human behavior that we next turn.

THE EMPHASIS UPON ENVIRONMENTAL SITUATIONS

The role of the environment as a causative factor in the determination of human behavior has long been recognized. According to Conklin:

From the earliest times it has been believed that species might be transmuted by environmental changes and that even life itself might arise from lifeless matter through the influence of favorable extrinsic conditions. . . . Many philosophers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries taught that man was the product of environment and education and that all men were born equal and later became unequal through unequal opportunities. . . . The equality of man has always been one of the foundation stones of democracy. Upon this belief in the natural equality of all men were founded systems of theology, education and government which hold the field to this day. Upon the belief that men are made by their environment and training rather than by heredity are founded most of our institutions with their commands and prohibitions, their rewards and punishments, their charities and corrections, their care for the education and environment of the individual and their disregard of the inheritance of the race.¹⁴

¹³ Karen Horney, *New Ways in Psychoanalysis*, W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., New York, 1939; Ives Hendrick, *Facts and Theories of Psychoanalysis*, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., New York, rev. ed., 1939.

¹⁴ Edwin G. Conklin, *Heredity and Environment in the Development of Man*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 5th ed., 1923, pp. 214-215.

With the application of scientific methods to the problems of behavior, it was natural that the prevailing emphasis upon environment should find expression in the resulting literature. Among the first students of crime to employ positive methods was Tarde, who championed the view that the criminal was entirely a social product.¹⁵ Among the psychologists was Watson, already mentioned, who had an almost complete disregard for inborn or constitutional traits. White, among the psychiatrists, is clear in his relative emphasis upon environmental factors in the causation of mental disorders.¹⁶ Adler, in the psychoanalytic group, has a similarly high estimate of the relative importance of environmental conditioning.¹⁷

The scientific study of behavior from the standpoint of environment came in time to be referred to as the "situational approach." Thus conceived, the term situation was used as a synonym for the stimuli which play upon the organism, these stimuli arising from conditions exterior to the organism.¹⁸ More will be said in subsequent chapters concerning the meaning of this term; but for the moment this first, simple interpretation will suffice.

The procedure of studying behavior in relation to situations, thus defined, began with physiologists—among them Loeb, Jennings, and others—in their work with "tropisms," i.e., reactions of organisms to light, electricity, heat, acids, etc. Next it was applied by psychologists—Thorndike, Yerkes, Watson, Kohler—in their experiments with rats, dogs, monkeys, and babies. The procedure of both of these experimental groups was the same: They prepared situations, introduced the subjects into a situation, observed the behavior reactions, changed the situation, observed the changes in the reactions, and so on.

It was a logical next step to apply this procedure to the study of human behavior, and much of the emphasis in recent years has been

¹⁵ Gabriel Tarde, *Penal Philosophy*, translated by Rapelje Howell, Little, Brown & Company, Boston, 1912.

¹⁶ William A. White, *The Mental Hygiene of Childhood*, Little, Brown & Company, Boston, 1924.

¹⁷ Alfred Adler, *Understanding Human Nature*, Garden City Pub. Co., Inc., Garden City, 1927. Consult his *The Neurotic Constitution* (Dodd, Mead & Company, Inc., New York, 1917) for his explanation of how the individual compensates for his organic deficiencies.

¹⁸ Kimball Young, *Personality and Problems of Adjustment*, F. S. Crofts & Co., New York, 1940, pp. 4-5.

in this direction. Although the methodology was developed by comparative physiologists and psychologists, the foundation for its extension to human behavior was laid by Pavlov, Krasnogorski, Bekhterev, Watson, and others, in their work on the conditioned reflex. What this means is usually explained in terms of Pavlov's classical first demonstration with dogs. A dog is shown a piece of meat. His mouth waters in anticipation of eating it. The meat may be thought of as the original stimulus; the mouth watering, as the dog's reaction. Pavlov's experiments showed that repeated association of other stimuli with this original stimulus in time brought out the original response. The reaction to the associated stimulus is called a conditioned reflex.¹⁹ Applied to children, these experiments had similar results, and made it clear how "fears and prejudices and prepossessions are produced, especially by the behavior of other persons. A single association may be sufficient to produce the reflex. There is on record, for example, the case of a youth who was the subject of an experiment with odors. The odor of roses produced a feeling of fear, and investigation disclosed that the subject had been injured in an automobile accident near a rose garden. A whiff of lavender may recall mother, and tuberose remind us of death. We have here [concluded the Thomases] a most important approach to the formation of personality traits as dependent on situations."²⁰

The idea of the relatively extreme modifiability of human nature, which is the essential implication of the work on conditioned reflexes, was supplemented by the conclusions of psychiatrists concerning the early conditioning of the human personality. At the beginning of the century, most psychiatrists worked with institutional cases and thought largely in terms of organic and biological factors. By the third decade of the century, experience with non-institutional cases, and particularly with children, was leading to the conviction that situations prevailing in the first few years of life are of paramount importance.²¹ One school of psychiatrists (or should we say one group of schools?), the psychoanalysts, has particularly stressed infantile and preschool experi-

¹⁹ I. P. Pavlov, *Conditioned Reflexes*, translated by G. V. Surep, Oxford University Press, London, 1927.

²⁰ W. I. and Dorothy S. Thomas, *op. cit.*, p. 507.

²¹ William A. White, "Childhood: The Golden Period for Mental Hygiene," in James H. S. Bossard (ed.), "Child Welfare," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, November, 1921, pp. 54-60; see also his *The Mental Hygiene of Childhood*.

ence. Some of them have gone so far as overwhelmingly to emphasize the consequences of the prenatal environment.

THE SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH TO BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS

Meanwhile the sociologists, recovering from their earlier inoculations of biological analogy, economic interpretation, and instinct psychology, saw in the situational approach very great opportunities for sociological emphasis. The sociologists' situational approach to behavior rests, of course, upon the striking concepts developed by the late Professor Cooley. His ideas of "the self as a social product," "the looking-glass self," and "the individual and society as two aspects of the same thing" had appeared as early as 1902, but it was destined to be another decade and more until the implications of these concepts began to be realized for purposes of sociological study.²²

Following Cooley, the next major step in the development of the sociological approach to behavior problems came with the publication of Thomas and Znaniecki's monumental work on the Polish peasant.²³ In this, the peasant is studied in the process of moving from a European to an American situation, thus approximating the controlled change of situation with which, as has been pointed out, the physiologists and psychologists had been working experimentally. Throughout their entire work runs the fundamental theme of the relationship between personality and the environing culture. "Personality is always a constitutive element of some social group; the values with which it has to deal are, were and will be common to many personalities, some of them common to all mankind. . . . Personal evolution can be understood only in connection with social life. . . . Personal life records, as complete as possible, constitute the perfect type of sociological material. . . . A social institution can be understood only if we . . . analyze the way in which it appears in the personal experience of various members of the group and follow the influence which it has upon their lives."²⁴

Of particular significance in its effect upon subsequent sociological thinking was the emphasis upon the individual's definition of the

²² Charles H. Cooley, *Human Nature and the Social Order*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1902.

²³ W. I. Thomas and Florian Znaniecki, *The Polish Peasant*, Richard G. Badger, Boston, 1919.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. iii, pp. 6, 10, 6, 7.

situation. On the basis of his cultural and social conditioning, the individual meets the various social situations which confront him, and defines them with reference to his own behavior. Thomas further distinguishes between those definitions of the situation which are laid down for the individual by his culture—which Thomas calls the moral or public definition—and those which represent the individual's own conception—which he terms personal or hedonistic. The interplay between man and his culture is well stated in these words: "The human personality is both a constantly producing factor and a continually produced result of social evolution, and this double relation expresses itself in every elementary social fact; there can be for social science no change of social reality which is not the common effect of pre-existing social values and individual attitudes acting upon them. . . ."²⁵

Following his work on the Polish peasant, which Burgess identifies as "the starting point for the sociological explanation of personality and culture,"²⁶ Thomas carried forward his analysis of the cultural conditioning of personality in his paper presented to the American Sociological Society in 1926, with particular emphasis upon the role of "critical experiences." "Behavior traits and their totality," he wrote then, "are the outcome of a series of definitions of situations with the resulting reactions and their fixation in a body of attitudes or psychological sets. Obviously, the institutions of a society, beginning with the family, form the character of its members almost as the daily nutrition forms their bodies, but this is for everybody, and the unique attitudes of the individual and his unique personality are closely associated with certain incidents or critical experiences particular to himself, defining the situation, giving a psychological set, and often determining the whole life direction."²⁷

Two years later, in his presidential address to the American Sociological Society, he made a clear distinction between different approaches to the study of behavior:

In approaching problems of behavior, it is possible to emphasize—to have in the focus of attention for working purposes—either the attitude, the value, or the situation. The attitude is the tendency to act, representing

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

²⁶ Ernest W. Burgess, "The Cultural Approach to the Study of Personality," *Mental Hygiene*, April, 1930, p. 310.

²⁷ W. I. Thomas, "The Problem of Personality in the Urban Environment," *Publications of the American Sociological Society*, 1926, vol. xx, p. 31.

the drive, the affective states, the wishes. The value represents the object or goal desired, and the situation represents the configuration of the factors conditioning the behavior reaction. . . . The situations which the individual encounters, into which he is forced, or which he creates, disclose the character of his adaptive strivings, positive or negative, progressive or regressive, his claims, attainments, renunciations, and compromises. For the human personality also the most important content of situations is the attitudes and values of other persons with which his own come into conflict and cooperation.²⁸

In his *The Child in America*, published that same year, Thomas drew the line clearly between the constitutional and the situational studies of personality, and defined the latter approach. Studies which concern themselves with the stimuli to which the person reacts are situational studies. In these, the main objective is to discover how the behavior of the individual is determined by his relations to other individuals and to a society, and this is sociological.²⁹

Reinforcing Thomas' point of view were the conclusions of Faris, Bernard, and others. In 1921, Faris indicted the explanation of behavior in terms of instincts,³⁰ and three years later Bernard's book on instinct appeared, followed by his analysis of environments in 1925.³¹ In his paper for the American Sociological Society in 1925, Faris foreshadowed the later sociological dictum of personality as the subjective side of culture in these words:

Individuality may then, from one standpoint, be thought of as character, which is the subjective aspect of the world the individual lives in. The influences are social influences, but they differ in strength and importance. When completely ordered and organized with the conflicting claims of family, friends, clubs, business, patriotism, religion, art and science all ordered, adjudicated, and unified, we have not passed out of the realm of social influence, but we have remained where the social group, taken separately, can be invoked to explain the behavior. Individuality is a synthesis and ordering of these multitudinous forces.³²

²⁸ W. I. Thomas, "The Behavior Pattern and the Situation," *Publications of the American Sociological Society*, 1928, vol. xxii, pp. 1-2.

²⁹ W. I. and Dorothy S. Thomas, *op. cit.*, p. 310.

³⁰ Ellsworth Faris, "Are Instincts Data or Hypotheses?" *American Journal of Sociology*, September, 1921, pp. 184-196.

³¹ L. L. Bernard, *Instinct: A Study in Social Psychology*, Henry Holt & Company, Inc., New York, 1924; "A Classification of Environments," *American Journal of Sociology*, November, 1925, pp. 318-332.

³² Ellsworth Faris, "The Nature of Human Nature," *Publications of the American Sociological Society*, 1926, vol. xx, p. 29.

Utilizing the end of the third decade of the century as a convenient point to summarize, we may identify three developments as having taken place by 1930. First, the idea of the situational approach to behavior problems had been formulated and had been stated with clarity and with some recognition of its wider implications. Second, the foundations for an understanding of the social conditioning of behavior had been laid. Physiologists and psychologists, working together, had proved the idea of the relative modifiability of human behavior; psychiatrists and social psychologists had explored the implications of this fundamental fact in their respective fields. Third, sociologists had formulated their own conception of personality, to which we turn next.

THE SOCIOLOGICAL CONCEPTION OF PERSONALITY

The term personality has a highly variable meaning, in both popular and scientific speech. Each of the sciences dealing with human life has developed its own conception of personality and made its own contributions to its study.³³ The sociological conception naturally is conceived in terms of those social traits and relationships which distinguish the individual and differentiate him from other members of society. Virtually all sociological definitions of personality go back to that of Park and Burgess, who identify it as "the sum and organization of those traits which determine the role of the individual in the group."³⁴ Since such a role grows out of the ideas, attitudes, traits, and habits of the individual, these too must be included in the sociological meaning of personality.

The sociological insistence is that personality, thus defined, is not inborn but is acquired or achieved. On the basis of the individual's native or innate equipment, the human personality is a product of social conditioning. In the process of personality formation, two sets of conditioning factors operate. One of these is the interplay of person with person, which we term social interaction. Of outstanding importance in this connection, then, are the experiences of the person in his or her social contacts. But the influences of relationships with other persons are constantly modified or qualified by what these other people have

³³ Cf. Gordon W. Allport, *Personality: A Psychological Interpretation*, Henry Holt & Company, Inc., New York, 1937; also Edward Sapir, "Personality," in *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1934, vol. xii, pp. 85-87.

³⁴ Robert E. Park and Ernest W. Burgess, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

learned. Here is the second set of conditioning factors, viz., the cultural, embracing the more or less accepted ways of group doing and thinking. Hence personality is determined also by the conditioning power of the cultural heritage and by the social patterns of behavior which social groups develop, approve, preserve, and transmit from generation to generation. What this means, in substance, is that the sociologist sees personality as a reflection of the social situations in which the individual has been reared and to which he reacts. The self is a social looking glass.

THE SITUATIONAL APPROACH TO BEHAVIOR: ITS MEANING

It should be evident from the foregoing survey that there are two fundamentally different and distinctive approaches to the problems of human behavior: one in terms of the traits and the personality of the individual who behaves, the other by way of the situation in which this personality is developed and to which its behavior is a response. The first of these is the one that has been followed generally by professional and scientific groups interested in behavior problems; the second has only recently been recognized as separate and distinct from the first. This second or situational approach provides the basic point of view on which this volume is written.

The Meaning of the Term Situation.

Thus far, the word situation has been used as a rather general term more or less synonymous with environment. This may have been satisfactory for surveying developments in the study of behavior centering around or related to this general approach; but for the further purposes of this book, greater precision in meaning is necessary. It is one of the continuing needs of the social sciences that terms in constant use shall be defined with as much care and precision as possible.

One of the few organized efforts to define the term was made at the meetings of the Section on Sociology and Social Work of the American Sociological Society in December, 1930. In this symposium, Mrs. Ada E. Sheffield presented the idea of family case work as dealing, not with a client, but with "a dynamic field of experience, a field in which the individual or the family figures within an aggregate of interactive and interdependent factors of personality and circumstance . . . a segment of interactive experience involving clients in complex rela-

tionships with their physical and social setting." This new unit she spoke of as a situation.³⁵

In defining the term for purposes of sociological analyses, Queen says: "A situation consists in relationships between persons viewed as a cross section of human experience, constantly changing in kaleidoscopic fashion, and affected both by material conditions and by relationships to other persons. Thus we make of the concept 'situation' an intellectual tool similar to the anthropologists' concept 'culture complex,' in that both are quite flexible as to content, both are capable of subdivision, both are something more than the sum of discrete elements, both convey the idea of relationships, both present nuclei about which configurations gather, and both are constantly changing."³⁶

When one turns from formal definitions of the term, such as those just cited, to its actual use in the recent scientific literature, he finds that at least three general basic ideas seem to be included in the concept of the social situation.

The first is the idea that the stimuli included are all external to the organism. This implies at once that the term situation is not, properly speaking, synonymous with the word environment. As Mead points out, environment means all the factors to which the responding unit responds.³⁷ This obviously would include certain acquired internal aspects of the organism which would obviously operate as stimuli. These internal stimuli are not included in the concept of the situation; we are concerned only with those that are external to the organism.

The second basic idea involved in the term situation is that of the reciprocal relationship of these stimuli. In other words, they do not just operate; they operate with, upon, and in relation to, each other. In other words, a situation is an organization of stimuli in which each stimulus has a given relationship to every other one. It is the particular relationship of these stimuli to one another that gives them their meaning in any specific situation.

This basic principle, that any fact derives its attributes and meaning from its relation to other facts, is pertinent to all scientific study. The

³⁵ Ada E. Sheffield, "The Situation as the Unit of Family Case Study," *Social Forces*, June, 1931, pp. 465-474.

³⁶ Stuart A. Queen, "Some Problems of the Situational Approach," *Social Forces*, June, 1931, p. 481.

³⁷ George H. Mead, *Mind, Self, and Society*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1934, pp. 245-247.

failure to realize this in regard to social facts has greatly handicapped sociological analysis in the past. An example of this principle from the mechanical field will serve as a simple illustration. A watch lies on the desk in the office wherein this is written. The time is night. The building is almost empty of human occupants. There is no other watch or clock in it. In relation to this particular office and its furnishings, this watch has a certain meaning, and the possible questions concerning the watch tend to be limited by the other facts which inhere in the situation. At this point I leave the office to visit a friend's home. This friend has a large and varied collection of watches, clocks, sundials, hourglasses, and the like. Here and now, the watch appears in a new situation. New questions arise concerning it. Its significance is totally different from what it was an hour ago. It is, of course, the same watch intrinsically, but its meaning has been profoundly changed. So it is with the facts which serve as stimuli in a given situation. From the standpoint of the situation, the stimuli included exist in relation to one another, and from this obtain their meaning in the particular situation under consideration.

The third characteristic of the situation is that it is organized about, or in relation to, some focal point or person. It is this aspect of a special relatedness, with reference to some person or object, that has come to be the essence of the scientific use of the situation concept. On the basis of this specific unity of organization the situation becomes an emergent, by which we mean that this special relatedness becomes in itself an additional and effective factor.

The simplest illustration of the idea of an emergent is water—a combination of hydrogen and oxygen, in the very definite proportions of two parts of hydrogen and one part of oxygen. This special relatedness forms the liquid emergent known as water, which has quite different properties, i.e., behavior, than either of its gaseous components. Concerning its reality, Mead speaks in these general terms: "Anything that as a whole is more than the mere form of its parts has a nature that belongs to it that is not to be found in the elements out of which it is made."⁸⁸

The existence and importance of this factor of special relatedness were recognized by a number of thinkers in the nineteenth century. Such men as John Stuart Mill, Lester F. Ward, Spaulding, Wundt, and

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 329.

others were aware of it, and various terms, such as "creative synthesis," "evolutionary naturalism," "organicism," "holism," and "heteropathic causation" were used to identify it. C. L. Morgan's term emergent has, however, found most favor among contemporary philosophers, biologists, sociologists, and the like, who utilize the concept.

By way of summary, then, a situation consists of a number of stimuli, external to the organism but acting upon it, organized as a unit and with a special relatedness to one another as stimuli of the specific organism involved. It thus becomes, as Lundberg suggests, a "field of force,"³⁹ or a segment of life to which the organism reacts as a whole. Thus conceived, it becomes a tool of precision for the scientist in studying the behavior of the organism, as definite and specific as the situation of the experimental physiologists and psychologists.⁴⁰

THREE ASPECTS OF SOCIAL SITUATIONS

Social situations having been defined in terms of the basic ideas included, it is pertinent next to indicate the distinctive points of view from which they may be regarded. In speaking of these approaches for purposes of study, reference is intended not to the methodology to be employed, but rather to the nature and range of the phenomena considered. To clarify the distinction between these different ways in which social situations may be regarded, an illustration may serve to advantage.

On the desk on which this chapter is being written there stands a Royal typewriter. Let us suppose that we are Martians engaged in an exploratory study of typewriters, rather than Earthians similarly interested in social situations. In all probability we should begin our study by regarding the typewriter as a mechanical structure made up

³⁹ Lundberg, George, *The Foundations of Sociology*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1939, pp. 217 ff.

⁴⁰ The reader should compare this characterization of the situation with that of Leonard S. Cottrell, Jr., in his article, "The Case Study Method in Prediction," *Sociometry*, November, 1941, pp. 358-370. See also Leonard S. Cottrell, Jr., and Ruth Gallagher, "Important Developments in American Social Psychology During the Past Decade," *ibid.*, May and August, 1941, for a statement of the main currents of change in contemporary social psychology. Another contribution by Cottrell is his "Analysis of Situational Fields—A Theoretical Orientation for Social Psychology," *American Sociological Review*, June, 1942, pp. 370-383.

of many separate parts. We would proceed to consider these parts—keyboard, letters, platen, ribbon, frame—inquiring and observing how they are related to each other, always coming back to a recognition of the basic structural unity. Our questions, our problems, the facts we observe, the generalizations we make, are those which bear upon the parts of this machine, their organization and special relatedness that is the essence of a Royal typewriter.

An operator of this machine, or structure, now approaches and begins typing. Immediately a whole new series of questions, observations, facts, and conclusions come to the fore. These have to do with the function of the parts of the structure. The field of study now centers basically around process, the process of operation. Each part of the machine is performing its role, a role which at the same time is related functionally to the role of every other part. This is a wholly new approach, distinct from the first-mentioned line of inquiry, yet a pertinent part of our study of the phenomena of typewriters and typing.

Sooner or later, in the course of our study, there will come the discovery that the typist is not simply operating a machine but is using the machine to record and convey letters, words, sentences, and ideas. The typed page may be a report on research, part of a presidential message, or a kidnaper's demand for ransom. It may be written in English, French, Latin, or American slang. The ideas expressed may be simple or complex, and the style may be direct or involved. Peculiarities of sentence construction and vagaries of punctuation and spelling attract our attention. In other words, an entirely new set of problems, facts, and interests engross us. We are now concerned, not with the structure of the machine or the processes of operation, but with the material or content of the process.

The three ways of regarding the phenomenon of typewriting may be identified under the headings of structure, process, and content, and the illustration just used serves to indicate the argument of the present chapter concerning the fundamental ways of approaching the study of social situations. The thesis here advanced is that social situations, just like social institutions and various other organized data in sociology, can be regarded and studied from the three distinct points of view identified by the terms structure, process, and content, and that much clarity and progress in understanding them will ensue if this distinction is recognized and maintained.

Structure.

A social situation is, from one point of view, a structure. Its analysis and description as such might be spoken of as a still-life picture. When we structurize a social situation, we see it in repose. Our interest is in the structural elements, their characteristics, and their position and relationships to one another. We are concerned chiefly with the relationships that are relatively continuous. What distinguishes a structure is the fact that it has form and that it is an organization, and the essence of both is continuity of relationship.

In the scientific study of a social situation structurally conceived, we take it apart, examine each part as to its nature, and inquire into the way these parts are organized into a unit. This is one separate but important step in understanding the situation. If I understand him correctly, it is this that Lundberg had in mind when he wrote: "After the field, i.e., situation has been selected, the problem is to structure it so that the relationship of the elements in the field can be accurately shown. The method of doing this with which we are most familiar is, of course, to name with words certain elements or factors in the situation and then by use of the adjectives or adverbs of ordinary language we attempt to give an accurate statement of the relationships within the field."⁴¹ Similar would appear to be Mrs. Sheffield's thought in her paper of over a decade ago: "The identifying of a pattern that is relatively constant helps us to bring order into our thinking about the variables which appear. It should clarify causative relations, should help us to follow social process, and to raise significant questions."⁴²

Process.

A second way in which a social situation may be viewed and studied is in terms of process. If the structural approach is a still-life picture, this second is a motion picture. We are concerned now with the interaction of the elements of the situation. The term social interaction is used constantly by contemporary sociologists, currently as the generic name for a whole set of processes taking place between individuals; thus, social interaction denotes the set of processes by virtue of which society exists. Here, however, we are using the term interaction as a category of analysis, to identify the reciprocal or interdependent re-

⁴¹ Lundberg, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

⁴² Sheffield, *op. cit.*, pp. 471-472.

lationship among the elements in a situation. The basic idea involved is not one of a mere meeting or collision of these component elements, but something more pervasive and subtle, in the course of which each acts upon or somehow changes or modifies the other. Such interaction may take place between individual organisms, between persons, or between persons and their stimulating environment. Conceived thus in terms of process, the situation becomes an immediately related and functioning segment of human experience, as both Mrs. Sheffield and Queen have indicated in their definitions cited earlier in this chapter.

Content.

Finally, from the third point of view, both structure and process are but vehicles or channels through which are transmitted a content of ideas, attitudes, words, and the like. This content we speak of as "culture."

The cultural content of the interactive process is confined to the human level. Before me on the floor, as I write, are puppies engaged in play. Here is an interactive process most assuredly; there are gestures, grimaces, growls, with an evident role of attitudes, dispositions, emotions, and the like. This is process, but there is no cultural content. Culture is exclusively a human product, and the culture content of the interactive process is confined to human relationships. The interactive process may be thought of, then, as a series of functioning operations conveying cultural items. Through this interactive process these cultural items are molded into a pattern which becomes the central core of the situation.

It is this cultural, or distinctively human, element in social situations which is apt to be overlooked by students who approach the subject from the background of certain disciplines whose point of view is essentially organismic. An excellent illustration of this appears in a recent and in many ways an excellent volume.

Some phenomena of nature exist in the form of static structures, others in the form of reversible or irreversible processes. Examples of the first are geometrical forms, of the second, waterfall, wind, combustion, etc. The existential form of the organism is dynamic. This has been formulated by Jennings in his much quoted statement that "The organism is a process." In the last analysis, "organism" and "life" are identical concepts. The first term places the emphasis on the structural, the second on the dynamic aspect. The two aspects are inseparable from each other. The essential

characteristics of the organism are, however, more clearly revealed in its function than in its morphological features.⁴³

This cultural content, however, is a very specific thing in the case of any given social situation, in spite of what has been said about its pervasiveness. Although culture is comprehensive, like the air we breathe, nevertheless the human personality is constantly selecting items and elements from the current culture, and is channelizing them through the interactive processes, so that any given social situation represents both a cross section and a cross selection of the contemporary culture organized about a given focal point.

The distinction between process and content, as well as the specificity of the cultural content, is well set forth by Anderson in his analysis of family situations.

The examples set for the child by his parents, older persons, and associates operate from birth onward. Older persons transmit a variety of techniques and attitudes. . . . Two problems can be distinguished: first, the actual content of the pattern which is imitated. Thus the child observes his parents greeting neighbors and friends, hears the comments made by his parents on individuals, organizations, and activities, and is given examples of either good or poor sportsmanship when he plays with his parents. A boy sent to a clinic because of his unpopularity was socially isolated among his fellows because of his many caustic comments and criticisms. It was found that his father was known throughout his community for similar behavior. Here what seemed abnormal in the boy had been learned in the normal manner directly from a parent. Next, we may distinguish the effects of these patterns as transmitted upon the child's adjustment. If parents quarrel frequently in the presence of the child, he not only acquires quarreling as a mode of approach to others but may react with uneasiness and frustration. A child is sensitized to some social actions and hardened to others. Whether he becomes hardened or sensitized depends upon his total make-up and the character of his previous experience quite as much as upon the intensity or character of the stimulation given.⁴⁴

IMPLICATIONS OF THE SITUATIONAL APPROACH

Once the full meaning of the situational approach to behavior problems is recognized, it becomes important to consider the implications of such an approach, and it is to this discussion that we turn next.

1. It seems necessary to begin by emphasizing that the situational

⁴³ Andras Angyal, *Foundations for a Science of Personality*, Commonwealth Fund, New York, 1941, p. 20.

⁴⁴ John E. Anderson, "The Development of Social Behavior," *American Journal of Sociology*, May, 1939, p. 849.

approach is distinct and separate, commensurate with the study of the personality that reacts to the situation. This fact would seem to require emphasis because such status has not been given to it in the past. Almost without exception, situations and situational factors in behavior have been referred to as though they were of secondary importance, a sort of by-product of the primary concern with the behavior of the organism. Studies of situations have been incidental studies, often casually made, and with secondary status ascribed to them. This has been true even when the avowed purpose was the study of the situation. Few studies of social situations have gone far without shifting consideration from the situation to the way in which the individual defines the situation and reacts to it.

Obviously, this has not made, nor can it make, for any considerable progress in the understanding of situations themselves. What has just been said is not to be interpreted, of course, as a criticism or depreciation of the emphasis in behavior studies upon the organism and its responses; the sole insistence here is that, once the role of the situation in behavior is recognized, the situational response must be recognized as distinct and separate, commensurate with studies of the organism and its behavior.

2. The second implication of the situational approach to behavior problems, and complementary to the first one, is a recognition of the situation as a *separate* field for scientific investigation. In other words, situations need to be studied, inductively and by themselves, without any reference to the way in which organisms react to them. This is said with particular regard to social situations, with which we are primarily concerned.

Emphasis upon this second implication again is necessary because of the past failure to recognize it. The reasons for this failure are easy to understand; they are natural products of the history of the situational approach. Recognition in scientific circles of the role of the situation in behavior began, as has already been pointed out, with the physiologists in their work on tropisms. In these studies, simple situations were created and the reaction of simple forms of life to them was observed; in these cases, there would have been little or no point to any major concern with the situation. The experimenters created them, and the elements involved were few and simple. For example, when a specific acid is dropped into water in order that the reaction of the Amoeba may be observed, the situation created is the combination of two

liquids with specific chemical formulas. The situation was not only simple, it was also thoroughly understood. Naturally, the investigator's chief concern was with the reaction of the Amoeba. The case would be similar with the application of heat or of light. The resulting situation was simple and could be expressed with the precision of a mathematical formula.

Following the physiologists, some of the psychologists utilized the situational approach. The situations employed by them were more complex, it is true, than those created by the physiologists. But the fact remains that they too were relatively simple, and that they were created by the experimenters. Moreover, the elements involved in their creation were physical elements whose nature was known precisely and whose relationship was a tangible and constant reality. Naturally again, the psychologist, once having created or established his situation, was concerned with it only incidentally, as a vehicle to his investigation of the subject's responses to this situation. This remained true of scientists like Pavlov, Krasnogorski, Bekhterev, etc., in their work on the conditioned reflex. One who goes through the reports on their work finds but scant reference, other than brief, simple explanation, to the situations employed. All the emphasis is upon the reactions to these situations, and the possible meaning of the observations.

This is perhaps the place to recall that most of the studies of child behavior have been made by persons trained in the biological and psychological sciences. Even the sociological studies of young children have been carried out by psychologists, psychiatrists, and educators. It involves no untoward criticism⁴⁵ of their work to point out that, in their approaches to child behavior, they have shown the effects of their scientific backgrounds. Nor does it seem difficult to understand how such students would be prone (a) to minimize the role of the situation, or (b) to assume that social situations are understood adequately, and that the important fact is to see how the individual defines the situation and reacts to it. Most of them, naturally enough, have therefore been disposed to think primarily in terms of persons and their reactions; and when they have spoken of the situational approach, it has been with one eye turned toward it and the other toward the behavior reaction to it.

⁴⁵ W. I. and Dorothy S. Thomas, *op. cit.*, p. 506; Ruth Pearson Koshuk, *Social Influences Affecting the Behavior of Young Children*, Publications of the National Research Council, Washington, 1941, p. 6.

The above assertions are based on an examination of the research publications on child development during the past two decades. Koshuk has summarized, in the reference just cited, the significant research material which has appeared in this field since 1925, and the reader is referred to this summary, not only for the specific bibliographical references but also for their terse and penetrating evaluations. The essential nature of these studies, in relation to the present discussion, is stated in the opening paragraphs of the summary as "dealing specifically with the influence of social factors, broadly defined, on the behavior of young children. . . . The emphasis turns out to be, quite naturally, on personality development within our own culture. . . ." ⁴⁶ In other words, while the role of situational factors is recognized, the chief emphasis is on the effect of the situational factor or factors upon the personality development of the child. Concern with the situation obviously is incidental; its understanding is tacitly assumed.

It is the emphatic insistence of this volume that a situational approach to human behavior is an entirely different matter. Social situations differ from mechanical or physical situations, and in a number of respects. In the first place, social situations are not created artificially as are those of physiologists and psychologists; they are accepted by the student as they are found. This changes the whole relationship of the student to the situation. In the one case, he creates a situation to see how the organism will react; in the case of social situations, he finds them ready-made and must learn to deal with them as they are. Second, social situations are more complex than the physical, non-human situations which have been dealt with prevailingly in behavior studies. The physiologists and psychologists customarily combine a small number of elements to create their situations. In the case of social situations, the very nature of the human personalities involved excludes any such simplicity. The human personality is a very complex product; hence the simple combination of a man, a woman, and a child, in a family situation, would be far more complex than the combination of three chemical agents, for example. Again, the elements involved in a social situation cannot always be identified with clarity, nor can their role in the situation be expressed with the precision of a mathematical formula. For instance, the degree and nature of tension between the father and mother may be an integral part of a family situation and have profound significance for the child; yet these aspects may be difficult to

⁴⁶ Koshuk, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

identify or express with any kind of satisfactory accuracy. The emotional quality of a social relationship is as real a social fact as the temperature of water, but no statistical thermometer has yet been devised to measure and express it. Finally, social situations differ from non-social situations in the inexorability with which they change. Most of the situations utilized by students of prehuman behavior were fixed, or they changed slightly or slowly or both. This is not true of social situations; they are constantly changing, at times with considerable rapidity. From one point of view, social situations are functioning processes, which places them in a category quite different from standardized psychological tests, for example.

The scientific study of social situations is possible only if they are regarded as objective and separate realities. This is the first step in their scientific investigation. We must begin by disregarding the ways in which individuals define situations or react to them. Further progress involves their analysis with regard to the nature and range of the stimuli involved, the ways in which these stimuli operate, the cultural content of the interactive processes in situations, and the manner of organization, or special relatedness of all the stimuli involved, with special reference to the object or person considered. Each of these must be defined with precision and analyzed with an appreciation of all the complexities present. Only after social situations have been thus studied, with the slow laborious technique of the scientist, are we in a position to consider adequately their role in the behavior of the individual. He who would study social situations would do well to analyze carefully the procedures of scientists who have dealt with situations at the prehuman level, and note the detailed precision with which they work. From the standpoint of methodology, consider the following quotation from Pavlov:

While, as we have seen, very strong and even specialized stimuli can under certain conditions acquire the properties of conditioned stimuli, there is, on the other hand, a minimum strength below which stimuli cannot be given conditioned properties. Thus a thermal stimulus of 45 degrees C. applied to the skin can be made into an alimentary conditioned reflex, whereas at 38 or 39 degrees C. (approximately 2 degrees C. above the skin temperature in the dog) a thermal stimulus is ineffective. Similarly, while with the help of a very strong unconditioned stimulus it is possible to convert a very unsuitable stimulus—for example, one which naturally evokes a different unconditioned reflex—into a conditioned stimulus, it is exceedingly difficult or even impossible with the help of only a weak unconditioned stimulus to transform even a very favorable neutral stimulus into a

conditioned stimulus. Even where such a conditioned reflex is successfully established, its occurrence results only in a very small reflex response. Some unconditioned stimuli may be permanently weak, others may display a weakness which is only temporary—varying with the condition of the animal.⁴⁷

It will be noted, in the above description, that the difference of a few degrees in the temperature of the stimulus determines whether it has conditioning properties or not. This is highly suggestive to students dealing with social stimuli, both in its implication of accuracy and in the importance of the degree of strength or weakness of a specific stimulus.

3. This is perhaps the place to emphasize the interdependence of the sciences which the careful study of situations involves. This is a matter concerning which clear thinking has not always prevailed. The point of view presented here can best be explained through the use of examples. The physiologists, in their studies of the responses of organisms to varying situations, obviously drew upon the data of chemistry, bacteriology, physics, and the like, in order to create and describe accurately the situations to which the organisms were submitted; and quite as obviously, no question concerning such a procedure would be raised. Similarly psychologists, in creating situations or tests of a physical or mechanical sort to which their subjects are submitted, drew without the slightest hesitation upon the underlying physical sciences. That is to say, these earlier groups who utilized the situational approach to the study of behavior called upon all the scientific disciplines necessary in order to understand, as accurately as possible, the nature of the elements which they combined to create the situations they utilized for their own specific purposes. When, now, one turns to the much more comprehensive, complex, and difficult task of dealing with social situations to which human behavior is a response, it ought to be clear that the sciences which must be called upon and whose findings must be utilized are far more numerous. Hence in utilizing the situational approach, sociologists should have no hesitance or compunction in drawing upon the work of physiologists, physiological chemists, endocrinologists, psychologists, psychiatrists, psychoanalysts, historians, economists, political scientists, cultural anthropologists, horticulturalists, statisticians, and the like, as the need may arise. The most extensive, and at times the most complete, utilization of the data of the complementary sciences by sociologists in developing the situational approach

⁴⁷ Pavlov, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

is entirely in keeping with the scientific folkways, and in this case peculiarly proper because of the difficulties of the material involved.

SUMMARY

The purpose of this chapter has been to establish the following facts about the situational approach to child behavior:

1. Human behavior has been a subject which has challenged man's attention through the ages. The accumulated wisdom of the ages, however expressed and labeled, has concerned itself largely with how people behaved, and why.

2. Within the present century, human behavior has become the focal point of a number of sciences. None of these has a monopoly of this particular province of study; many are now contributing to an understanding of the problems involved.

3. One definite approach to behavior problems is through study of the situations to which behavior is a response. Building upon the earlier work of the physiologists and behavioristic psychologists, the sociologists found this approach peculiarly significant for their work.

4. The sociologists' conception of behavior is reflected chiefly in their studies of personality, which they see primarily as the result of social interaction and cultural conditioning.

5. The term situation is used in this volume to mean (a) a number of stimuli, external to the organism, but acting upon it, (b) organized and operating as a unit, and (c) bearing a special relatedness to one another as stimuli of the specific organism involved. It is, thus, a "segment of life to which the organism reacts as a whole."

6. Social situations can be studied from three distinct points of view. These are identified by the terms structure, process, and content.

7. The objective analysis of behavior along the lines just indicated constitutes an approach to behavior problems commensurate in importance to the study of the individual and his traits. It is a separate, distinct, and highly important approach, and needs to be recognized as such.

8. Social situations need to be studied objectively, and without reference to the way in which organisms react to them. This has not been done in the past because, for the physiologists and psychologists who first dealt with the role of situations, such situations were simple, ready-made, and thoroughly understood. Social situations, however, are not created as a rule by experimenters; they are accepted as they are found.

Part II:

The Child and His Family Setting

Family Structures and the Child



A social situation was defined in the preceding chapter as an organization of stimuli, external to an organism and acting upon it, and having a special relatedness to one another as stimuli of the specific organism involved. Furthermore, it was pointed out that social situations, thus conceived, could be studied from three points of view, identified by the terms structure, process, and content. The present chapter is devoted to (1) the meaning and importance of family situations in child development; (2) types of family structures and their varying significance for the child; (3) recent changes in family structural forms; and (4) the significance of the predominance of the immediate family form in our contemporary society.

FAMILY SITUATIONS: THEIR MEANING AND IMPORTANCE

The term family situation, as utilized in this book, involves the application of our definition of the phrase social situation to the specific family group. A family situation may be defined, accordingly, as a unit of stimuli operating within the confines of the family circle, and organized in relation to the person or object which serves as the focal point in the particular case being considered. Stated another way, the term family situation means a group of family stimuli operating as a unit with reference to some polar point. This polar point may be an outside object, a member of the family group, or a non-member observer or student of the family. It is important to keep in mind the role of this focal point, for what is implied is that the family situation changes as the polar point is changed. To speak in general terms, the family situation of a child is the unity of existing stimuli within the family circle as they operate upon the child; that of the husband or wife in the same family will be quite different. The change in the polar point

changes the entire situation, its involved stimuli and the relationship of these stimuli.

There are two basic reasons for beginning the situational approach to child behavior with the study of family situations. One is their primary importance in the determination of behavior patterns; the second is their prior value for purposes of scientific analysis.

The importance of family situations in the formation of personality is emphasized today by all the sciences which are participating in the study of human behavior. Much of the recent advances in the fields of psychology, psychiatry, psychoanalysis, sociology, criminology, education, and social work reveals with striking clarity the early and pervasive role of the family in conditioning the behavior of its child members. The family is a society, the first in which the child lives, and the most powerful in changing original nature into the socialized personality.

This emphasis upon the family's primary importance in the socialization of the child must not be taken to mean, as frequently happens, that the personality is wholly and irrevocably formed during the first few years of life. Brown contends, for example, that far too much emphasis has been placed upon childhood experiences per se, that subsequent experiences determine the importance of these early activities, and that the individual, instead of being a product of his childhood, is the result of what adolescence, youth, and adulthood do to childhood experiences.¹ Similarly, Folsom points out that no one has yet proved that the total rate of personality development is faster in childhood than in later life.²

The prior value of family situations for purposes of scientific analysis derives from at least three characteristics. The first of these is the relative size and simplicity of family situations. In many cases, family situations include only two persons. Three-person family situations, particularly where very young children are concerned, are quite common. Current census data reveal the general prevalence of the small-family system. To speak in quantitative terms, family situations involving only a few persons are a normal feature of our life. In the second place, family situations are of a continuing and recurrent nature. The interacting personnel remain normally the same, at least

¹ Lawrence G. Brown, *Social Pathology*, F. S. Crofts & Co., New York, 1942, p. 11.

² Joseph K. Folsom, *The Family and Democratic Society*, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, 1943, p. 323.

over considerable periods of time. Many of their characteristics, as well as many of their relationships, are relatively permanent and stable. Particularly is this true in the study of social situations with the child as polar point. Ordinarily, changes in personnel are limited in number, particularly when compared with such changes in other social situations; changes in the characteristics and relationships of this personnel tend to occur slowly and often imperceptibly. Finally, the relationships in family situations are peculiarly frank and intimate. Customarily there is less dissembling in the family than in other human groups, certain occasional and conspicuous instances to the contrary notwithstanding. Because of its intimacy, frankness, and privacy, the family provides a unique opportunity for the free expression of personality; it is these characteristics which facilitate equally well the scientific study of family situations. In short, one is led to conclude that family situations are the most important of the social situations which determine behavior, and relatively the easiest to study.

THE FAMILY AS A STRUCTURE

Since the time of Sumner, sociologists have recognized that a social institution consists of a concept and a structure, and that this structure is a framework which consists not of physical realities but of relatively permanent relationships.⁸ The family is a social institution, and, as such, it is a social structure, consisting of a framework of relatively continuing relationships. More specifically, this means that the family has an over-all form, a size, a given number of parts, i.e., members with a relatively stable nexus of determined roles.

To study the family as a structure is to view it in repose, that is, to consider it as a form of organization. Thus approached, there are many lines of inquiry which may be pursued. One aspect of the family as a structure is selected for analysis in this chapter. This is the structural form, or over-all organization, of the family unit. Attention is directed primarily to the different types of structural form, to recent changes in emphasis regarding these structural forms, and to their significance in the child's social development.

STRUCTURAL FORMS OF THE FAMILY

People constantly use the word family as though no question concerning its meaning could possibly arise. Even experts in the field of

⁸ William Graham Sumner, *Folkways*, Ginn & Company, Boston, 1906, pp. 53 ff.

family study tend to do this. There is, of course, some justification for this because, as Linton has pointed out, "all societies recognize the existence of certain close-knit, internally organized cooperative units intermediate between the individual and the total society of which he is a part";⁴ and to some one of these every person is assigned on the basis of a biological relationship clustering around a common ancestry. When the word family is applied to such a unit, there is general agreement as to its meaning. When one proceeds beyond this point, however, the term family comes to mean something quite different from one culture to another. What begins as a rather standardized biological or reproductive unit comes to take diverse forms as a socially institutionalized phenomenon. Anthropologists have shown considerable interest in this problem of the structure of the family in the various cultures which they have studied. Sociologists, concerned more with contemporary culture, have given less emphasis to it, despite its great importance in our own societal organization. It will be desirable, therefore, to consider briefly, by way of background, some structural forms of the family in our contemporary western culture, with special reference to the child.

When we consider the family from this point of view, it is necessary, first, to draw a line between the immediate household unit and the larger body of related kinsfolk. The distinction is a real one, and the term family has been applied in different cultures to each of these to the exclusion of the other. The student from a middle-class American home today, where the word family is synonymous with the reproductive unit of society, finds it difficult to realize that there have been many societies in which such units have not been so designated and in whose everyday life such a domestic structure has played a rather minor role. In translating the documents used in his study of the Polish peasant, Znaniecki found it wholly impossible to use the word family in the sense in which American students use it. The family, to the Polish peasant, was a social group which included all the blood and law relatives up to a certain variable limit, usually the fourth degree. To designate the smaller grouping which we call the family, Znaniecki used the term marriage group.⁵ It is well to remember that in our own

⁴Ralph Linton, *The Study of Man*, D. Appleton-Century Company, Inc., New York, 1936, p. 152.

⁵W. I. Thomas and Florian Znaniecki, *The Polish Peasant*, Richard G. Badger, Boston, 1919, vol. i, p. 87.

culture the transition in the concept of the family as a larger kinship group to that of the smaller household unit is rather recent. It is still found most typically in the urbanized areas of our large metropolitan centers, with their apartments, their small row-houses, and their residential hotels, all lacking the old-fashioned "spare bedroom" as the most convenient defense against invading relatives.⁶

Thinking in terms of the contemporary American child and adapting our terminology to this point of view, we find that the following family structural forms stand out. First, there is the child with his father and mother. This is the biological and reproductive unit; in normal times and circumstances the parents are married and have established a home, where they live with their child or children. (In ordinary times, about three-fourths of American men under twenty-five years of age who marry establish a separate home.)⁷ Thus the biological and reproductive unit becomes also a social unit in which develop the community and intimate features of social life. We shall call this the child's *family of procreation*.

In a great many households, however, the child grows up in a family which differs from the above. Often one and occasionally both of the parents may be missing; on the other hand, an aunt or uncle or grandparent or other kin, friend, boarder, etc., may be a continuing member of the child's family. This group is the household unit in which and through which the child receives his orientation in the social world. This it seems most pertinent to call the child's *family of orientation*. In many cases, the child's family of procreation and the family of orientation are the same; but often this is not the case. In either event, both of these forms may be thought of as the child's *immediate family* in the sense of comprising the circle of his immediate, intimate, and continuing family contacts.⁸

Each child as he grows up discovers that he is also a member of a

⁶Ernest W. Burgess, "The Family as a Unity of Interacting Personalities," *The Family*, March, 1926, p. 3.

⁷Paul C. Glick, "Family Status of Men of Military Age," *American Sociological Review*, April, 1943, p. 157.

⁸Some of the concepts here used are to be attributed to W. Lloyd Warner, of the University of Chicago. The reader should also consult J. L. and J. P. Gillin's recent textbook, *An Introduction to Sociology*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1942, chap. 9, for a summary of family-type groups. Such a comparison will reveal our preference for the term kinship group family, rather than "extended family," as used there. Also, our use of the terms family of procreation and family of orientation is slightly different.

larger kinship group to which the term family is applied. William Brown, for example, is one of the West Chester County or one of the South Carolina Browns. This group contains all the relatives by blood or marriage up to a certain degree of relationship, a degree which varies from one family or culture to another. Here again it is necessary to identify two subdivisions. Some of these kinship group families develop primarily through or around the male line; some, through the female line. The terms patrilinear and matrilinear are applied here, the reference being not so much to the line of descent that is utilized as to the degree of social adhesion or isolation that follows the marriage. For example, when Mary Jones marries William Smith, are she and her children regarded as Jones or as Smith kinsfolk by each group and by both? The answer to this question varies considerably from one family to another, and in different regions of this country. The distinction is important, particularly again with reference to the child and to the family's functioning in the development of his personality. For this larger circle of kinsfolk, as contrasted with the immediate family, the phrase *kinship group family* is used.

The basis of this larger kinship group is a blood fiction, i.e., all members consider themselves to be related by blood. It is obvious, however, that this form of family is something more and different. Although the basic implication is that of common blood or descent, there are other and highly important factors in its formation. These include as a rule commonness of point of view, community of rearing, a sense of intimate familiarity, and the sharing of a common place or status in society.

This seems the proper place to emphasize a point so often overlooked: that the biological basis of the family is secondary and that the primary factors in creating its unity and importance are the social bases which have just been enumerated. There are, let it be added, several lines of evidence which warrant such a conclusion. First is the work of the anthropologists which shows that kinship groups exist and kinship is reckoned in societies which know nothing of the biology of procreation. Second, there is the almost universal rule which permits adoption into the kinship group, thus clearly indicating that the social rather than the biological relationship is the important thing. Again, it must be obvious that kinship reckoning in unilateral lines ignores a great many of one's blood relatives, another instance of social acceptance

given precedence to the blood bond.⁹ This conception of the family as a social rather than a biological fact, emphasized by contemporary sociologists, is particularly significant in the study of the child's social development.

An obvious but by no means insignificant fact about the kinship group family, when descent follows through the male line, is the sharing of a common name. This serves to bring together people with the same name, leading them often to think of themselves as a common group and also having other persons regard them as such. In past times, the family name frequently was a distinctive label, indicating a person's association with a place or occupation.¹⁰ This is less true today, but it still serves as an index of status.¹¹ The more self-contained and powerful a family is, the more its name takes on a social significance. This will be discussed more adequately in a subsequent chapter.

The hold of this kinship group family upon its individual members usually depends in this country upon the strength of the "we" feeling which it has developed. This depends in turn upon a number of factors. One of these is the spatial distribution of its members. In earlier times, kinship groups generally lived closely together, with constant interrelationships among the members; this is still true in some areas. When such a condition obtains from infancy, persons are conditioned from birth to accord much more importance to contacts with their kinsfolk than when they are apt to be scattered over wide areas and when mobility may make their present whereabouts uncertain. A second factor is tradition. What has been the past history of the family in this respect? Some families have a history of close interdependence over long periods of time, and conscious effort tends to maintain this under changing contemporary conditions; other families have never "made much over their kin." This is affected in turn by a third factor: the reputation or prestige of the kinship group. There are family lines whose prestige has been such through the years as to confer distinction upon every individual within the range of its membership. No one is likely to ignore his inclusion among the Cabots of Boston. Families like these tend to be "closed corporations" in many of the affairs of life.

⁹ J. L. and J. P. Gillin, *op. cit.*, chap. 9.

¹⁰ For a brief summary, consult the article on "Names" in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 14th ed., 1937, vol. xvi, pp. 63-64.

¹¹ Clarence Schettler, "Does Your Name Identify You?" *Social Forces*, December, 1942, pp. 172-176.

On the other hand, there are families which have been discredited, perhaps repeatedly, by the behavior of one or more members, with the result that the hold upon their kinsfolk is weakened correspondingly. In still other cases, crises within or involving the kinship group call forth a sense of solidarity otherwise lacking. Between the extremes of the Cabots on the one hand and the misfit families on the other, there fall a large number of kinship group families whose members come in some way to identify themselves with some particular traits or qualities, and come to be so regarded by their friends and associates.

Perhaps something should be said here about the status of the kinship group family. There are societies in which the term family means only this particular type; but this is not true as a rule in our contemporary western culture, for here its importance has been much reduced in recent years and its role tends to be secondary or supplementary. Perhaps most American children today are thought of as members of two types of families, the immediate and the kinship group, the word family being applied somewhat indiscriminately to both types.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF FAMILY STRUCTURAL FORMS

These structural forms of the family represent fundamental distinctions in the study of the family. In varying degrees they loom in the background of most children. What is their meaning for child development?

Very early in life, the child comes to sense that there is not one but several families with which he has some kind of relationship, that these families differ from one another in certain respects, that his relationship with them is not always clear, and that often they are contradictory and conflicting. Thus the distinctions that have been drawn between the different types of family structure are clearly and closely related to the child's personality growth; one does not have to accept *in toto* the psychoanalytic developments of the past generation to realize that many of the internal, and often quite hidden, conflicts of the individual derive from his relations with his several family groups.

First, the child comes to learn that there are differences in many things between the family of procreation and the family of orientation. What problems are created for children when the family of orientation differs from the family of procreation? The significance of the presence in the home of adults, usually relatives, on husband-wife relationships

has received considerable attention. Far less attention has been given to what it means to children to be reared in homes where adults other than the parents live; yet Glick has shown¹² from an analysis of unpublished census data that in 1930, of all normal families (families with the head and his wife residing together) with one or two children under twenty-one years old, 25.3 per cent included one or more adult relatives. This percentage, large as it is, gives the extent of this practice at the time of the census enumeration; it does not indicate how many children pass through this experience in the course of their minority. If to the number of families with adult relatives are added the families in which adults other than relatives are included, the figure will be higher.

The coming of another adult into the family of procreation changes the structural form of the family in that it enlarges the series of continuing relationships which comprise it, as well as alters the whole form of the structure. Novelists and dramatists have shown repeatedly how the addition of one person to the family group changes the entire situation in the home. Most such representations, however, are confined, as in *Ethan Frome*,¹³ to adult relations, but the same is equally true in the case of child relations.

Perhaps the basic fact about the presence of "other persons" in the home is that they are not acceptable equally to all members of the family of procreation. They may be acceptable to the child, or to the parents, or to one parent and the child, and so on, but not to the other or others. The presence of an adult relative, particularly if childless, invariably means the presence of an active competitor with the parent of the same sex as the relative for the child's affection. This competition may be overt or it may be subtle and insidious. Or the adult relative is not included in the rules or regime which the parent imposes upon the others in the family; hence this adult, no matter how circumspect his behavior may be, appears to the child as a challenge to the parent's authority, or as a refuge or comfort which the child may seek. A good many domestic situations might be summarized in the statement that the presence of a younger adult in the family means a potential competitor for the affection of the child; and the presence of an older person, a potential competitor for his control. The problem, of course,

¹² Paul C. Glick, "Types of Families: An Analysis of Census Data," *American Sociological Review*, December, 1941, pp. 830-839.

¹³ Edith Wharton, *Ethan Frome*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1911.

is often less simple than such a summary suggests. Adults who live with other families often tend to be problem adults. A parent's brother or sister who is not married, or who has been married but not successfully, or who cannot get along with other people, or who does not earn enough to support himself, or who is too sick or too feeble to live by himself—these constitute a good proportion of the adults who live with "their" families. Taking in a relative is often the assumption of a burden and a problem. Parents may assume such an obligation with the philosophy of maturity or the resignation of despair, but to the child the newcomer is as he is, without the comfort of compensating philosophy.

There are, of course, cases in which the problems created for the child are obvious and serious. Here is a nine-year-old boy who is taught to practice sex relations with his twenty-six-year-old aunt who lives with the family. The boy alternates between a sense of guilt after each such episode and his fear of his aunt, with serious consequences for his school work and his personality. In other cases an uncle seduces his fourteen-year-old niece; a boarder practices masturbation with two young sons in the household; grandpa assumes the right to discipline the grandchildren, with whom he lives, as well as to set their parents "straight"; the friend of the mother subtly stirs up the children against their father. Such cases are all too frequent, especially in that area of family life which textbooks generally ignore.

The addition of adults to the family of procreation alters accordingly the age and sex structure of the child's immediate family. An example will serve to illustrate this point. In a family of procreation, with a father, a mother, a son, and a daughter, the age and sex structure is evenly balanced. There are two adults and two children, two males and two females. This family is now joined by two male adults. There are now four adults and two children, and three adult males to one adult female. In this case the whole form and structure of the family change; also involved is a shift in the center of gravity in the predominating subjects of conversation, play, activities, and all the other pursuits of the family.

The family of orientation at times includes boarders and lodgers who may share the family's life. In an earlier day, when the sociological literature was moralistic and reformist in tone, much was said as to how their presence imperiled the moral and social fabric of the home. In more recent years, despite the emphasis upon housing problems,

there has been but little reference to their effect upon home life; despite our new insights into the processes of behavior formation, there has been only a slight analysis of their role in the formation of child personality. The following paragraph, taken from a life history document, suggests interesting implications about the role of a lodger in a normal home. The writer is a twenty-two-year-old boy; the family, a white-collar clerical one, living in a small eastern town. Although religious by profession, the family enjoyed occasional lapses from the standards of their religious group, the mother having a taste for a drink now and then, and the father enjoying a bawdy story. The story concerns Norman B., a lodger who lived with the father, mother, and son for about eight years, from the son's ninth to his seventeenth year.

I still distinctly remember that man. I distrusted and hated him then, and I do so now. When I ask myself why, I think it is because of what he did not say. He would always sit at home and seldom spoke unless spoken to. But you could feel what he thought, that he disapproved of what we were doing. He seemed so smug and self-righteous that even as a boy I felt that I wanted to hit him. Sometimes, if we had a particular bit of fun at home, he would get up silently, perhaps sigh, and prepare to leave. When father or mother asked if he was going out, he would answer in a quiet superior way, "I am going to church," or "I am going to prayer meeting." Soon I began to take a curious delight in being naughty just because I felt his eyes were on me. As I think back to my home life during those years, I keep on thinking about him and I am sure that the way he antagonized me stimulated me toward misbehavior more than anything else in my youth.

This reference to the lodger is incidental in the history from which this excerpt is taken, and for that reason is particularly suggestive of the role of a lodger in a normal family situation. A survey of the information available on the lodger and boarder problem indicates that many of the behavior developments are more serious, quite a few involving sex contacts between children and lodgers or boarders, usually between opposite sexes and often spanning unusual age differences. Parents at times close their eyes to such implications, unwilling no doubt to curtail the family income derived from these sources.

Another fact of significance for child development is the child's discovery of and experience with the conflicts between the immediate family and the larger kinship group.¹⁴ There is considerable sniping

¹⁴ For a study of the relationship between the immediate family and the larger kinship group, consult James H. S. Bossard and Eleanor S. Boll, "The Immediate Family and the Kinship Group—A Research Report," *Social Forces*, May, 1946, pp. 379-384.

among relatives in many families, as most everyone knows, and contact with children indicates that this is not lost upon the child. Often relatives visit a home and deliberately sabotage parent-child relationships. The mother's sister may dislike the children's father and make slyly derogatory remarks about him; the father's brother may cast slurs at the mother or her sister; another relative adroitly suggests that the father is cruel to the mother. In the case records of the William T. Carter Foundation is the following story related by Henry K.:

The family consists of a father, mother and child. The home was comfortable with two servants in constant attendance. The mother's brother, a not too industrious person, made extensive visits during his lengthy periods of unemployment. Another brother, newly married, brought his wife for lengthy visits. Henry remembers distinctly the impression he received from these relatives. His father, being away from home at work to maintain this establishment, was a recurring subject of conversation of these less occupied and economically strained relatives. Their attitude was that Henry's father was not friendly, that he was a hard and cruel man, that he was not cordial to a great many nice people, and that in all of these ways he somehow was doing a very mean thing to Henry's mother. Henry recalls how distinct this impression was, and how it bothered him, because to him his father was kind and generous. Henry reports that for several years he was greatly confused about his father.

A certain degree of conflict between the child's patrilinear and matrilinear kinship groups is inevitable, frequently it is serious, and on occasion it comes to the child's attention and has great meaning. The case of Richard K., taken from the files of the Carter Foundation, suggests the implications of such conflict for a normal boy in a normal home.

Richard K. remembers that his mind was in considerable turmoil as early as his fifth year because of the conflict in his mind between the two kinship groups of his parents. It bothered him a good deal until past his adolescent years. His father was a Brown, the oldest child in the Brown family. The Brown family was a compact group, with strong loyalties, positive convictions and quick tempers. It was semi-patriarchal in form. Each Sunday it gathered at the grandfather's house, where all matters of interest and importance to three generations of Browns were discussed. The Browns knew they were Browns, were proud of it, and made much of it. Before his fifth year, Richard was conscious of the Brown label on himself.

Somewhere around his fifth birthday, he spent a week during the summer vacation with his mother's aunt, an older woman who loved children and was said to have a way with them. From her he sensed that his father had done wrong to his mother (he learned that this was the fact that his father

had a temper and spoke crossly to his mother at times), that this vague something was common to the Browns. Later the aunt told him that she hoped he was not like the Browns. Several days after that, the aunt looked at him fondly and said, "You really are a Smith (mother's family) instead of a Brown." Several days later, he returned to his home; he remembers it was as a somewhat heavy-hearted and even more preoccupied boy.

At Christmas time, the issue was revived. His mother, her brother, and he, with horse and sleigh, visited Grandfather Smith. He was a jolly, pipe-smoking, happy, placid old man. There was much happiness abounding in the Smith home. Richard particularly remembers a sleigh ride on a moonlight night, with the singing of old favorite songs. It was good to be with the Smiths, but the next week in school he remembered that he signed his name as Richard Brown.

A year or two seemed to pass, when the whole conflict was reopened when Mrs. Smith's brother died following an appendectomy. Richard cried bitterly, as he walked about the grounds surrounding his home. His quick-tempered father was irritated. "Stop your crying. Uncle Edwin is better off dead than alive. He was too lazy to work anyway." Later, in calmer vein, his father tried to explain that Uncle Edwin had never gotten very far, and that this was a reference to the easy-going, happy-go-lucky living of all of the Smiths.

Gradually, as he grew older, the basic conflict took this form—the Smiths are likable people. It is pleasant to be with them; I like to visit the Smith relatives; I always enjoy myself there; they do interesting things; I like the Smiths better than the Browns; I want to be a Smith; I am a Smith. But the Smiths haven't gotten very far in the world. And my name is Brown; people call me Brown; to all outside people, I am a Brown; I am my father's son; he dominates me; when I marry, my children will be Browns; the Browns have money, attractive homes, horses to ride; it has many advantages to be a Brown.

Finally, there are the conflicts and tensions among kinsfolk in the child's background, and the question of their meaning for subsequent mental conflicts, as emphasized in the psychoanalytic approach. This raises problems which require careful exploration. Mead suggests,¹⁵ for example, that the true patriarchal family is much more troublesome in this respect than the American system of the immediate family.

In the true patriarchal family, where the child's attention is focused in upon his parents, where all his intense childish effort is directed towards becoming part of their relationship, the type Oedipus conflict is often intense and terrible. There a brother is either an ally against the father or else a surrogate for the father, and the child's deep repressed hatred of his father as a rival shapes any hatred of his brother as a rival—in an absolute

¹⁵ Margaret Mead, *And Keep Your Powder Dry*, William Morrow & Company, Inc., New York, 1943, p. 110.

trate the extremes of this historical development by contrasting the historic Chinese family, with its several generations living under one roof as a matter of course, of pride, and of religious devotion, and the American woman who asks for and receives a divorce because after her marriage her husband's relatives moved into their home and her husband refused to ask them to leave. "What in China," says Groves in commenting upon such a case, "would seem commonplace appears to the western reader an impossible matrimonial situation."¹⁷

The process of change to the predominance of the immediate family structure is still going on. This is particularly true among the more recent arrivals in America. The earlier immigrants came to this country often as large family groupings; later, individuals or parts of families predominated, but carried with them the tradition of this concept of the *Grossfamilie*. As a result, the first or immigrant generation frequently established in America the kinship group family; whereas the second generation, born in this country, accepting its different family tradition, and eager to exemplify it "without stain of foreign origin," has accepted the immediate type. This relatively sudden change involves elements of tragedy, with neither generation able to understand the point of view of the other. The depression decade of the nineteen-thirties brought to the forefront many such family crises, with the adherents of the older order expecting to share the earnings of an employed kinsman, who, steeped in the American tradition, saw no reason or justice in such an expectation.

The causes of this changing predominance in the structure of the American family seem clear. In part, it is the result of the marked horizontal mobility of our population, often involving transfers over long distances. The average American kinship group tends to sprawl all over the continent. Earlier, American families scattered over great distances under the stimulus of economic opportunity; more recently, because of the facility of transportation. Vertical mobility has played an important role, because with so large a proportion of the population raising its status, it was inevitable that the smaller units within the kinfold should progress at unequal rates, with a resultant avoidance each of the other. Another factor undoubtedly has been the concentration of the population in urban areas, with its apartment-house separate living and the inevitable curtailment of rooms to the barest

¹⁷ Ernest R. Groves, *The Family and Its Social Functions*, J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia, 1940, p. 19.

requirements of the immediate family. Then, too, the establishment of social security systems means that the insurance features of the old kinship group system are no longer vital to the individual. Finally, the emergence of the immediate family unit as the dominant and often the only form of family structure recognized is only a phase of the large shift in our society from a primary to a secondary group basis.

Today an increasing number of children, particularly in our urban centers, know only, or mostly, their immediate families. What contacts they have with other kinsfolk are of a secondary rather than a primary nature. To have relatives live with one leads to comment in many urban circles today and calls forth condolences from one's intimate friends. It is considered in the light of an unnatural situation inevitably resulting in hardship, from which husband, wife, and child may be expected to hope secretly but fervently to be relieved at the earliest possible moment.

Although this may seem entirely natural to the present generation, it is well to emphasize that this is a distinctly new, and very recent, experiment in human history. Its development is limited largely to the present century, and is still characteristic largely of our urban culture. Moreover, it has been happening at a time when the immediate family has been decreasing in size. (The declining birth rate will be considered in a later chapter.) The fact pertinent here is that the decline in the birth rate has involved primarily the extension of the small-family system. All the data available today indicate that in recent decades there has been a steady and appreciable decrease in size, both in the family of procreation and in the family of orientation. The extent of the decrease varies considerably from one area to another, being smallest among farm and small-town populations and largest in the metropolitan centers. Such a decline in size throws into even bolder relief the growing emphasis upon the immediate family structure and its role in the processes of child development.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PREDOMINANCE OF THE IMMEDIATE FAMILY

The increasing shift to the immediate family form involves a change in the size, nature, and complexity of the child's primary socializing group. Viewed as a socializing agency, the earlier kinship group family within which the child was largely reared was a good deal of a world within itself, with its own variety of personnel and its own framework.

of values, maxims, jokes, judgments, and attitudes. Mangione has recently given us a picture of this kinship group world in his description of life in a "little Sicily" in a contemporary American city. He writes: "There were seldom less than fifteen men, women and children at those Sunday sessions; on the Sundays when it rained, there would be as many as thirty. It was obvious that no one else in Mount Allegro had as many relatives as I did; it was also true that no one else's relatives seemed to seek one another's company as mine did. Sundays or weekdays, they were as gregarious as ants but had a far more pleasant time. There were always relatives and friends present or about to arrive. And when they finally left for the night, they occasionally came back for a surprise visit which they called a *sirinati*."¹⁸

Into this world the child was thrust and to it his earlier adjustments were made, no matter how uncongenial these contacts and requirements were. Years ago, Chesterton, the English essayist, in writing of the family, said: "Of course the family is a good institution because it is uncongenial. It is wholesome precisely because it contains so many divergencies and varieties. It is, as the sentimentalists say, like a little kingdom, and, like most other little kingdoms, is generally in a state of something resembling anarchy. It is exactly because our Uncle Henry does not approve of the theatrical ambitions of our sister Sarah that the family is like humanity. The men and women who, for good reasons and bad, revolt against the family, are, for good reasons and bad, simply revolting against mankind."

In the smaller, immediate family of today, and against the background of other social changes, the child's early contacts, being less dictated by the kinship circle, permit a greater degree of selection. Very early, the child moves with his clique rather than with his clan. This brings with it elements of selection, of freedom, and of more enriching experience. It results, too, in the greater importance at an early age of other groups, like the play, nursery, and kindergarten school groups.

There can be no doubt that family relations in general and parent-child relations in particular are intensified in the immediate family. A number of years ago, W. I. Thomas pointed out that with the dissolution of the larger kinship group the small family "has become in-

¹⁸ Jerre Mangione, *Mount Allegro*, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1942, p. 22.

troverted, and turned upon itself, and has taken a pathological trend in the direction of demanding and conferring response.”¹⁹ More recently, Margaret Mead, in her stimulating interpretation of our changing American culture,²⁰ refers to the intensification of relationship that follows from the limitation in the number of family personnel. Many a contemporary child having only a parent or parents as anchors in a world that is otherwise vague and shifting, naturally places great emphasis upon these ties. The results of this vary from the enrichment of parent-child relationships on the one hand, to a pathological inversion on the other.

This relatively exclusive dependence upon the immediate family means that the quality and continuance of these family relationships become correspondingly vital to the child, as well as to all the members of the family. If the immediate family ceases to function, the child's family anchorage is gone. We recall here how frequently siblings in present-day homes are admonished to get along with each other because “you are all that each has got.”

The passing of the kinship group family and its scattering over a continent means that many children have no relative to turn to when the immediate family passes or fails to function. The child passes to the care of strangers and comes to be considered, as such children do in our contemporary society, as being a bit peculiar because he “has no family.” What makes all this of such great importance is that along with it has developed the increasing breakup of immediate families through desertion, separation, and divorce. One of the peculiar tragedies of the child of today is, then, that there is a greater reliance upon the immediate family at the very time when it is increasingly breaking up under the impact of modern life.

The immediate family makes for much greater positiveness, and possibly promptness, in family control and direction of the child. This is true chiefly because there are fewer persons to consult and fewer points of view to reconcile. Particularly is this manifest in the case of important family issues. Shall Mary stop school and help her mother? Shall Jim go through college? Shall Elinor go to business college?

The younger generation of today, in its immediate family life, will find it difficult to appreciate how complicated such problems are in a

¹⁹ W. F. Dummer, *The Unconscious*, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., New York, 1927, p. 157.

²⁰ Mead, *op. cit.*, pp. 83 ff.

kinship group family system, where so many more persons have to be consulted, family precedents have to be considered, and family jealousies have to be avoided. Current decisions by the immediate family tend not only to be more prompt but may also be more intelligent. The situation in regard to the child's discipline is similar. The child in the larger family group was often insulated by four or five layers of kinsfolk before contact with an irate parent was established; on the other hand, the erring child, provided his conduct was considered sufficiently reprehensible, might be chastised four or five deep. Most often, however, these intermediaries would disagree or conflict, rather than reinforce each other. All of this naturally made for confusion, inconsistency, and that lack of promptness which is the essence of effective discipline. Decision is a virtue, even if the decision is bad; and the decisiveness in child rearing and development made possible by the immediate family is a fundamental even if not spectacular factor in the background of the contemporary child.

In many ways the most significant result of the dominance of the immediate family is that it results in a constant measurement and comparison of the child, his traits, his problems, and his development with children in other non-related families, also immediate in structure, rather than with the children in his own kinship group. The contemporary immediate family has become standardized; it compares itself with other standardized families as they appear in magazine advertisements, on the radio, on the screen, and as sensed in social contacts. This constant tendency to take a sidewise view of life has a number of significant results. First, there is a great deal of emphasis upon conformity. The parent wants the child's home, clothing, toys, activities, etc., to be like and at least as good as those of "other children." The ancient legend of the doll that grew a soul and became a human being after having been the play friend of a dozen generations in the same nursery gives way to the contemporary parent's fear that his child's toys do not conform to those in the latest issue of *Life*. "From the day when self-conscious fathers stand outside the glass-walled hospital nursery and anxiously compare the shape of their own babies' heads with those of the other babies, the child is valued in comparative terms, not because he is of the blood and bone and 'name' of his parents, but because of his place on some objective (but undefined) rating scale of looks and potential abilities."²¹ This constant comparison, not

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

with his own kinsfolk but with "other people's children," creates in turn a tremendous drive toward achievement. From the beginning of his life, the child senses that his place, even in his own family, depends on his achievement and on how he compares with other children. At the same time, he is learning that this is true of his family. On these two levels, child and adult, operates the American pressure to get ahead, by way of both material achievement and social status. In short, the immediate family system paves the way for our accepted pattern of upward vertical mobility.

It is the consensus that many Americans suffer from a sense of insecurity, and there can be little doubt that this is in part a heritage of the immediate family form. The very size of the family unit is important to the child in this respect for the same reason that the size of the ledge from which we view the precipice below affects our sense of security. The American child who lives and matures in a father-mother-child family unit stands on a very narrow family platform, even if it is in no way imperiled. To this is added the constant danger for the child that the few persons he must rely on may falter or fail. Reinforcing these implications of a small family unit is the fact that as the contemporary child grows older his life diverges from that of his parents—a common and inevitable fact because the child does not follow the occupation or status of the parents. Moreover, such a condition is particularly pronounced and serious in the large number of immigrant homes where the child is educated beyond anything his parents can comprehend, and where he must early adjust to sailing an uncharted sea, so far as they are concerned. In these cases, the immediate family does not understand the activities and achievements of the child, nor can the parents offer him any guidance or stability or security. The situation makes for insecurity for both parent and child. This likewise will be discussed more adequately in a subsequent chapter; attention is called here only to its relation to the immediate family system.

There remains to be considered the relation of the immediate family to the "adoption fantasy." Many children pass through a stage when they entertain the thought that they may be adopted. They hear, vaguely and at odd times, both at home and in school, about children who are not the "real" children of their parents. Consciousness of this problem is apt to develop at just about the time when children are going through the process of being socially weaned from their parents.

This is likely to be a period of stress and strain between child and parents, the child thinking that his parents do not understand him, that they are not sympathetic, and that there really is not much of a common bond between them. Thus it comes about that the unconscious wish to be free from obligation to the parent finds expression in the fantasy that the parent is not a real but an adopted one. At times this crystallizes into a vehement conviction, at other times, into the salving comfort of a possibility, or the corroding worry of a hidden fear, or a feeling of guilt for entertaining a thought which obviously is not true. In a large kinship group family, with numerous uncles, aunts, cousins, and other relatives constantly around the child in the sustaining group, such fantasies are much less likely to arise or to be seriously entertained.

SUMMARY

1. A family situation may be defined as a unit of stimuli operating within the confines of the family circle, and organized in relation to the person or object which serves as the focal point in the particular case.

2. Family situations should be studied with all possible scientific objectivity, first, because of their great importance in determining personality patterns; and, second, because they offer the best opportunities for the development of scientific techniques in the situational approach to behavior problems.

3. The family may be viewed as a structure. Thus considered, and from the standpoint of the child, one can distinguish between the immediate family, comprising the household family unit, and the kinship group family, including relatives up to a variable degree of relationship. The immediate family may be the family of procreation or the family of orientation.

4. The difference between these two subtypes has great significance in child development. The coming of another adult into the home alters the whole form of the family structure and creates many problems for the child.

5. The immediate family has come to be the characteristic American type, although the process of its ascendancy is still going on. This is a new development and experiment in child history.

6. The predominance of the immediate family form instead of the kinship group type has great importance for the child. It means that his primary socializing group is smaller and less complex. Greater

selection of child contacts is possible. Parent-child relationships are intensified, but the child's family anchorage is more limited. There is apt to be greater promptness and positiveness in child rearing. The child is compared chiefly with other people's children rather than with those of his kinsfolk. There results a passion for conformity and a tremendous drive toward achievement. The child's feeling of insecurity may be heightened. The "adoption fantasy" becomes more pronounced.

7. Many conflicts in the child's mental life can be understood if viewed against the background of the tensions and conflicts in the family structure. The psychoanalytic approach can be very helpful here.

Family Process and the Child



A family is more than a structure. It is a vibrant functioning reality, a group of persons living together in intimate continuing relationships. A second approach, then, to the study of family situations may be made through the objective analysis of the interactive processes which take place between the elements (chiefly persons) comprising the family structure. The purpose of the present chapter is to consider the family as a form of social interaction, with particular reference to the significance of these processes in the social development of the child. Accordingly, the emphasis here is upon the processes that are involved, the role of these processes, their more important constituent elements, and the nature of their operation. Specific problems created for the child and reports on research findings concerning these problems are reserved for a later chapter.

THE MEANING OF SOCIAL AND FAMILY INTERACTION

Sociologists speak a special language, as Waller reminds us,¹ because it facilitates precise communication in their specialized field. In this scientific jargon, the term interaction has the sanction of frequent usage and great emphasis; hence it seems necessary to say something more about its meaning. "The notion of interaction is not simple, but very complex," says Ormond.² It "involves, not simply the idea of collision and rebound, but something much more profound, namely, the internal modifiability of the colliding agents." For a complete analysis of interaction as a sociological process, the reader is referred to any

¹ Willard Waller, *The Family*, The Dryden Press, Inc., New York, 1938, p. 15.

² A. T. Ormond, *Foundations of Knowledge*, Macmillan & Company, Ltd., London, 1900, p. 196.

standard work on systematic sociology.³ For an interpretation of family life in terms of the interactive process, the reader will find most helpful Waller's book, *The Family*, already cited. An even more intensive application of the interaction concept to social phenomena is found in Brown's book, *Social Pathology*, for the author makes this concept the central frame of reference for the problem of personal and social disorganization.⁴ Each or all these books will provide an adequate grasp of the many aspects and ramifications of the interactive process, as well as proof of its fundamental significance in the field of sociology.

For our purposes, it will be enough to identify the term as the generic name for the range of contacts between persons through which each influences the other, to the end that every new experience becomes part of a new totality. The term family interaction is used to include these reciprocal relationships between the members of a family in their continuing life with each other; and the results of this interactive family process, so far as the child is concerned, may be thought of as the child's familial sociopsychological heritage.

THE PECULIAR NATURE OF FAMILY INTERACTION

Family interaction is, as has just been pointed out, one form or area of social interaction and, as such, is part of the more comprehensive field of personal interrelationships. It is important, however, to point out that the family is also something more; it is a unique and distinctive kind of interaction. A family is a set of peculiarly intimate relationships, such as one finds perhaps nowhere else in the field of social interaction. Its intimacies are of many different kinds and degrees. They are mostly continuing in character. With few exceptions, they have the full sanction of society. They come to express themselves in a terminology which has meaning to the family members and to no one else. These intimacies and their peculiar tokens exist regardless of the degree of harmony within the family; in fact, family discord and tensions precipitate their own distinctive varieties of expression. Even when the family breaks up, some of these intimacies persist as do the tokens of their expression, so that this aspect of family interaction often continues long after the family's corporate existence.

³ Excellent here is Leopold von Wiese and Howard Becker, *Systematic Sociology*, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, 1932. Consult also Robert Park and Ernest W. Burgess, *Introduction to the Science of Sociology*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1921, chaps. 5, 6.

⁴ Lawrence G. Brown, *Social Pathology*, F. S. Crofts & Co., New York, 1942.

Another reason for the distinctive peculiarity of family interaction is to be found in the composition of the family. The family community is made up of units dissimilar in age and sex, complementary in their nature, mutually responsible, and with the unifying bond of kinship for all but husband and wife, in the latter case there is the compensating bond of other relationships. Perhaps no one has described this phase of family life better than Bosanquet did more than forty years ago:

As with all organic wholes, its parts are admirably fitted by nature to subserve each other's needs, and to supplement each other's efforts. The need of the weak for protection finds its correlative in the pride of the strong in protecting; the clinging appeal of the child for affection elicits a response which might otherwise remain dormant for ever. The authority which all adults like to exercise finds a beneficent outlet in guiding the action of immature wills; and children who weary when left to the caprices of their undisciplined natures, find strength and contentment in a rule which is autocratic without having the impersonal rigidity of external law. And the man, again, who would prefer solitude to the constant clashing at close quarters of his own will with that of another man, finds it completed instead of thwarted when its functions are supplemented by those of the woman."⁵

Despite all this, the formal existence of a family does not, as everyone knows, guarantee a "condition of continuing harmony." There is about family interaction this additional distinctive feature: its naked incisiveness. One can dissemble only little in most phases of family interaction. Indeed, from more than one aspect, family interaction is a brutal process, the more so because of the very likenesses of the family members and the intimacies of the relationships between them. Here again it is worth while to quote Bosanquet at some length.

A plain person finds no attraction in a mirror; and a person sensitive to his own defects of character may be inexpressibly jarred by seeing them reflected in another. I have known mothers whose irritation at the faults of their children was greatly enhanced by the fact that they recognized them as merely the faults of their own childhood recurring once again. And we fear no critic as we do the critic of our own Family, for has he not the key to all our weaknesses within himself? The stranger may be hostile and severe, but we can always console ourselves with the thought—which in nine cases out of ten will be perfectly true—that he does not really understand us. It is not being misunderstood which hurts most; it is being understood at our weakest, just as what helps the most is being understood at

⁵ Helen Bosanquet, *The Family*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1902, p. 242.

our best. And the member of our Family understands us literally "down to the ground," for it is the same ground upon which he himself stands.

Here, too, we may perhaps find an explanation of the strange bitterness which so often seems to attach to differences of opinion between members of the same Family. When an outsider differs from us we can accept it as something to be explained away by differences of experience, of surroundings, of education, above all of inherited temperament and disposition; in a sense it is possible to think of each being so far right that his opinion is the natural outcome of the sort of person he is. But when our brother differs from us there is no such escape from discord; this, we feel uneasily, is the same sort of person as ourselves, his opinion proceeds from the same nature as our own, and we cannot see any reason for the conflict. It is as if one's own judgment were divided against itself.⁶

LEVELS OF INTERACTION

It will help, perhaps, in clarifying further the nature of the interactive process in the family to point out that it takes place on several levels. Speaking generally, it may be said that interaction operates on as many levels as there are levels of communication; some idea of what this involves may be gathered from the fact that Sapir, in his analysis of speech as a personality trait, identifies at least five different levels of speech alone.⁷ For our purposes, it will be sufficient to distinguish three main levels. The first is sensory interaction, a comparatively simple form confined to reciprocal reactions through the various senses—the sound of a voice, the sight of a gesture or facial expression, or a tactual contact between one person and another. Interaction on this level plays a particularly important role in the earlier years of a child's life. Unfortunately, the analysis and assessment of sensory interaction as a factor in child development have been largely neglected—this in spite of the fact that the most vivid impressions which adults retain of their own parents are often memories of the interactive process on this level.⁸

Second is emotional interaction, as in reciprocal joy, fear, love, hate, etc. Everyone is familiar with the fact that the feeling reaction of one person, communicated to another, modified and returned to the first person, tends to intensify the original emotional condition. This process is revealed most clearly in the development of mob psychology. In its saner and simpler forms, it is going on constantly between the mem-

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 249–251.

⁷ Edward Sapir, "Speech as a Personality Trait," *American Journal of Sociology*, May, 1927, pp. 892–906.

⁸ Cf. M. M. Lewis, *Infant Speech*, Harcourt, Brace & Company, Inc., New York, 1936.

bers of the family group; it constitutes that intimate emotional responsiveness which is so uniquely the characteristic of family life.

Finally, there is interaction at the intellectual level, the process taking the form of a reciprocal exchange of sentiments, ideas, abstractions, judgments, evaluations, and the like. Here one person expresses an opinion or states an idea, to which another person reacts; this calls forth a reaction from the first, and so on. This process is clearly revealed in arguments, debates, and "bull sessions," but again the most common form of it is found in rational conversation such as recurs constantly in the normal relationships of family life.⁹

The distinction between differing levels of interaction is particularly important when considered in relation to the child. It shows, first, that the interactive process begins long before the child has learned to speak. The foundations of parent-child relationships, therefore, precede verbal interaction. The implications of this are profound, both for child development and for mental hygiene problems. Second, the differing levels of interaction emphasize the variety and the subtle scope of the interactive process. Parent-child interaction is far more comprehensive than rational discussion based on the child's developing ability to participate. Third, the natural history of parent-child relationships, which remains to be written, must be based upon an understanding of the sequence in the differing levels of the interactive process.

GENERAL IMPORTANCE OF FAMILY INTERACTION

The constant interaction between the members of the family constitutes one of its fundamental features and gives it such great importance in the development of the personality of its members, especially its younger members. Moreover, it is this aspect of family life that is being emphasized by contemporary students, both because of an increasing appreciation of its importance in the study of personality and also because, in a rapidly changing society constantly becoming more complex, personal relationships within the family become increasingly important. Recent literature on the family emphasizes this, particularly in the case of its adult members, chiefly husband and wife. The growing prevalence in our society of specialized groups into which one puts but part of his personality, the increasing formality and im-

⁹ Cf. Park and Burgess, *op. cit.*, chap. 5; Edward W. Gregory, Jr., and Lee Bidgood, *Introductory Sociology*, Prentice-Hall, Inc., New York, 1939, pp. 55-56.

personality in our social relations, make the family virtually the one place where one may be at ease. This is particularly true in regard to the emotional aspects of our lives. Man is not a perfunctory, rational animal. It has been said that what distinguishes man from other animals is drinking without being thirsty and making love at all seasons. The essence of both, obviously, is emotional.

It is the general importance of family interaction for the child that chiefly concerns us here. It is in this unit of interacting personalities that the child learns to live, in which his personality first takes form, and in which this personality continues for a number of years to be confirmed and enriched. There are at least three reasons why this family experience is of such overwhelming importance in molding the child's personality. In the first place, the family gives the child his earliest or first experience in living, and first things always have a special significance. A girl's first beau, a boy's first kiss, an author's first book—these always have a peculiar meaning. Second, family experiences are repeated over and over again. By the fifteenth birthday, for example, a boy or girl may have spent as many as 5475 days or parts of days with his or her family. This repetitive aspect alone is enough to give the family an overwhelming importance. Third, family interaction is tinged from the beginning by an emotional coloring that places its interrelationships in a distinctly specialized class. This is particularly true in the case of parent-child or intersibling relationships.

COMMON CONTRIBUTIONS OF FAMILY INTERACTION TO THE CHILD

Extended consideration has been given to the interactive aspect of family life, not only in the recent literature on the family and on parent-child interaction, but also in the more generalized studies of interpersonal relations. These studies tend to be divided into two main groups. In the first group are those which are concerned with family interaction, primarily from the point of view of determining what it is that the child gets from this interactive experience, and particularly as far as his sociopsychological needs and development are concerned. The second group of scientific studies have centered about certain generic processes in interpersonal relations, with reference to family interaction. To turn here to the first group, a survey of the literature on child development reveals that at least seven contributions have been emphasized in recent years, and these will be summarized briefly.

1. One of the basic things which the family gives its members is the satisfaction of what W. I. Thomas has called "the desire for intimate response." Every normal human being—and this includes every normal child—wants to be wanted, to be understood, to be appreciated, to be loved. This desire can best be satisfied in the family. Children get this satisfaction from their parents, and it is because of this that so much of their experience with their parents is so meaningful. It is this that is so instrumental in creating the bond which binds the child to his family emotionally, even where there are other unattractive and unfavorable aspects of the relationship. Persons who take children away from sordid surroundings and homes where they are badly and even cruelly treated, and place them in better homes or more attractive surroundings, are frequently chagrined to find these children longing to return to the parental hand that abuses them. What the child is apt to miss in such cases is the emotional tie-up with people who share this intimate reciprocal responsiveness. This affectional bond between members of the family, particularly between parent and child, is of vital importance under any circumstances of family life; it is increasingly and correspondingly important as other bonds—economic, protective, educational, and religious—become less effective.

There is some reason to think that this aspect of the family interactive process has increasing meaning for the child in contemporary culture. This observation is based on the growing complexity and impersonality of social life, particularly in urban centers. We recognize that these changes have great meaning for the adult members of the family. The recent literature on the family, with its emphasis upon the role of the family as a cushioned retreat for its members, leaves no doubt of this. Little thought, however, has been given to the significance of these changes for the child. The urban child's life is complex and impersonal, too. A seven-year-old, for example, may be in a second-grade class of fifty members in a school with hundreds of pupils. To get to that school means coping with many persons and running the gauntlet of incessant traffic. If a boy, he may have to fight his way to school and back. Obviously, such a child needs a home as a "cushioned retreat" from his activities outside the family even more than the adult. It may be that the most important need of a school child under ten years of age is to have a mother awaiting his return home, and that the lack of this maternal presence is one of the most serious costs of the

gainful employment of women with young children. Because they are less tangible than needs of feeding and discipline control, requirements of this kind are overlooked.

2. The family sets the stage to develop and utilize the child's abilities. Through its selection of toys, games, and playmates, the family establishes the first situations in which the child performs. At first these situations are apt to be centered around him, to encourage and stimulate him alone; later, the element of competition is allowed to enter. Usually the earlier forms of competition are artificial or protected in character, devised for the purpose of showing what the child can do. Later this may be changed, and the children may be introduced gradually to, or left to wander into, a natural or unprotected competition. It is the art of parenthood to manage these changes deftly and aptly, and for the best development of the child. Obviously the difficulties of many children are due to the fact that they have grown up without being "emancipated" from a protected competition.

3. A desire for the approval of one's kind is a basic human need. Here again the family is important because it is our first audience. The giving or withholding of the approval of this audience operates as a powerful selective force in determining the goals upon which the child concentrates and around which he develops skills.

Adler has greatly emphasized the "talent"-finding result of proper parental encouragement. As he writes:

Take for instance a little three-year-old girl who tries to sew dresses for her dolls. She takes a few stitches which are certainly far removed from works of art, and her mother comes to her and says, "Do you know, that is a very good beginning. Now if you take a few more stitches like this" (showing the girl) "then you will have a beautifully dressed doll!" Such a mother, by encouraging this child in its efforts, giving it new fields to conquer, appealing to the child's ability to do more, is preparing the way for a 'talent.' Contrast another mother whose three-year-old daughter makes the same clumsy stitches in a doll's dress, and is met with, "For Heaven's sake, don't bother with that needle! You'll only prick yourself! Little girls can't sew doll's dresses!" In the first case the child is encouraged to find new combinations, new colors, new models, and develop its technic because its efforts are met by encouragement and applause. The second child loses all desire for activity in which its clumsiness is held up as a cause for shame and punishment. The first develops a talent. The second will complain all her life, "I have absolutely no talent for needlework!"¹⁰

¹⁰ Alfred Adler, "Character and Talent," *Harper's Magazine*, June, 1927, p. 68.

Similar is Anderson's emphasis. Our home environment, he points out, like that of our schools, seems to be so arranged that more practice is given the individual with much practice, and less proportionately to persons with less past practice. Here from early life a child is furnished with the opportunity to hammer nails. In the course of the next ten or fifteen years he has 100,000 opportunities to hammer nails, whereas a second child in the same period of time has only ten or fifteen opportunities to do this. When children are twenty, we may be tremendously impressed with the ease and accuracy with which the first child hammers nails, ascribe it perhaps to an inherited ability, and be equally impressed with the awkwardness and incapacity of the second child, and his lack of innate ability. The differentiating effect of practice, the role of the family audience in his development, may be shown easily in regard to manual skills; and there seems no reason why the same is not true of other forms of behavior. The parable of the talents is apparently the statement of a fundamental principle.¹¹

4. The child receives from the family his first lessons in living with other persons and in making adjustments to them. The family is a miniature society in which the child comes slowly to discover that there are other persons whose presence, needs, and rights have to be considered. Gradually he finds that he must limit his demands in the presence of others, and must adjust to them. The transition from the egocentric to the socialized stage takes place gradually and at varying times and rates in different children. Sometime, between the eighteenth and thirty-sixth month, true social behavior develops, and chains of response of both the linear and the circular type described by Allport put in their appearance.

Certainly the child receives plenty of practice in this process of adjustment. He has to adjust, first of all, to the adults in his family group—parents, relatives, servants, etc.—and each of these adults is apt to be a good deal of a law unto himself. Then, if there are other children in the family, adjustment must be made to them on the basis of their personalities, age, and status in the family group. In other words, the young child has to learn early to shift gears continually, as it were, in dealing with the other persons in the family group.

Part of this experience is the child's introduction to the study of

¹¹ John Anderson, in M. F. Dummer, *The Unconscious*, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., New York, 1927, chap. 3.

human behavior. He learns how people act, how they react, how they differ. He learns that one adult talks much and does little, another is exactly the reverse; one threatens but does not punish, another does neither, a third does both. It is amazing to discover at how early an age children classify their elders on the basis of their behavior types. "My daddy don't spank, he just be cross," a two-and-a-half-year-old told her governess when the latter threatened to report the child's conduct to her father and made the added threat that he would punish her. Then, too, children sense early how members of the family group differ in the ways in which they meet situations and deal with other persons, which techniques succeed and which do not. Mother has her own ways of dealing with daddy when he is angry; this is what grandma did to her neighbor; sister manages to win usually, because of her technique; brother Charles seems to lose out so often because he acts thus and so. The family, in other words, is a psychological laboratory and a school which is always operative, and in which human nature and relationships are most often seen in the raw, i.e., on the basis of that intimate and uninhibited responsiveness which is the essence of family life.

5. It is perhaps here that the role of the family in the determination of personal attitudes should be discussed. The reality and importance of attitudes, as well as the prior and basic importance of the family in their determination, have been much emphasized in recent years by the social sciences. Among the attitudes formed through family experience are those which its members develop toward each other on the basis of their intimate and emotional relationships. Each member of the family group comes to develop an attitude toward every other member—child toward child, parent toward parent, parent toward child, and child toward parent. It is in this way that the child obtains his patterns for a varied number of later personal relationships.

The attitude of the child toward the parent has been particularly emphasized by students of behavior problems, chiefly because it has in it more than a person-to-person relationship; it involves also the relationship of one person to another who has greater powers. The parent, in other words, is not only a person but also the symbol of authority, and the child's attitude toward the parent becomes his attitude toward authority.

James Plant has written of this with appreciation, particularly of the way in which this role of authority is established.

The validators, or criteria for enforcement, of personal authority are age, possession, and idiomatic relationship. The validators of social authority are numbers, accomplishment, and acclaim. The validating factor of cosmic authority is its essential "unreasonableness" in the sense that its operation apparently transcends human control or rational planning.

The young child listens to the parent because she is older. "My mother is older, therefore she knows better." Age is of the greatest importance in all children's play. As the older child is orienting himself to new demands, social rather than personal, he says, "My mother is older, therefore she does not know better—she does not understand our age."

Without perhaps actually owning our children, we, as parents, yet attain all of the symbols of such ownership. Thus we feed, clothe, and bundle about the infant as we do other family chattels; and much of the authority relationship is that of "I am *your* mother; you are *my* child."

The third validator is termed idiomatic relationships, in the sense that some peculiar tie exists between parent and child that differs qualitatively from that between either and any other person. One harks back here to what was said as to the establishment of status. It is precisely those factors that enter into the question "Who are you?" that have that unreasonable or irrational element that is the basis of idiomatic personal relationship. It is possible that certain identifications play a large role here, so that I care idiomatically for a person who seems to me to have certain traits in peculiar relation to certain traits that I consider my own. Whether this statement is anything beyond the rationalization of a situation, is beyond our present purview.

Thus the child's adjustments to personal authority come to mean his early conditioning to those factors of age, possession, and idiomatic relationship that enter into personal relationships throughout life. This patently rests a considerable burden upon parents that they act as though they were grown up, instead of merely proclaiming they are; that they show that possession of children is simply a formulaic expression for their own development and not an end in itself; that idiomatic relationship actually plays its sincere role of adding to the child's security.¹²

The importance of adjustment to authority as a pattern of behavior can best be appreciated when we remember that every individual lives his life constantly in the presence of forces greater than he. These forces may be cosmic, such as the forces of nature; or political, such as the state; or occupational, such as the employer; or domestic, such as one's mate; they may be all of these, and others, existing at the same time. All of us must adjust all through our lives to persons and forces greater than we.

Modern psychiatrists who contend that much adult behavior is the

¹² James S. Plant, "The Child as a Member of the Family," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, March, 1932, p. 69.

result of childhood patterns formed through family experience have emphasized greatly the role of the family in the creation, through parent-child relationships, of patterns of reaction to authority. An adherent of this point of view is J. C. Flügel,¹³ who points out that the extent and the rapidity with which a child attains independence are largely prophetic of his subsequent attainment of independence toward the world at large; that much of the intolerance of and resistance to authority on the part of certain individuals or even of whole sections of a community is due to unconscious hatred of parents; that much criminality is due to the same source; that displacement on to physicians, priests, etc., of feelings originally directed to the parents is frequent; and that resistance to political, civil, and educational authority is to be explained in many cases on the same basis.

6. We are on more objective ground when we proceed to point out that the child gets from the family interactive process many of the tools with which he acquires his beyond-the-home education. Particularly important here is the acquisition of language. The role of language is recognized in the sociological literature primarily as a vehicle (a) in the accumulation and transmission of culture, and (b) in the development of personality.¹⁴ Basically, language is a symbolic technique that permits communication among individuals. The ability to use this technique is the key to contacts, interactions, and relationships which are involved in social organization. To express it in another way, words are the symbolization of experience; and the number, variety, and adequacy of the words the young child learns through his family experience, and the meanings which are fixed upon these words, become the tools of his subsequent instruction. A more extended discussion of the child's linguistic acquisitions in the family, and their importance, will be found in a later chapter.

7. Finally, the child obtains through his family experience his first living habits; and because so many of these first habits remain through later life, this acquisition is of great importance in the development of the person. Living habits are specific things, both as to the area of life they comprehend, and as to the particular procedures involved. That is to say, eating habits revolve around the food needs, and they include

¹³ J. C. Flügel, *The Psychoanalytic Study of the Family*, Hogarth Press, London, 1926.

¹⁴ Sapir, *op. cit.*; Ernest R. Groves, *The Family and Its Social Functions*, J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia, 1940, pp. 152-153.

the foods relished and eaten, how and when eaten, with what regularity, in what combinations and amounts. We are dealing here not with vague general notions but for the most part with very definite, concrete aspects of living. John develops the habit of gulping down his food; it is Mary's habit to eat a scanty breakfast, or none at all, Bill never eats liver.

It must not be assumed that these living habits have to do only with eating, sleeping, bathing, bowel movements, and the like. They include many other things, such as manner of walking, manner of speaking, gestures, grimaces, carriage, way of sitting, use of eyes and hands, care of personal appearance, etc. Detailed studies of human interaction reveal the surprising importance of many such matters, which unfortunately are often considered trivial by parents.

Out of the vast amount of scientific data of recent years, two facts stand out in clear relief. One is that the foundations of human personality are laid in early childhood; the second, that the chief mold of personality thus becomes the family. It is in family experience that we find the origin and fixation of the reactions of one individual to another. As Anderson has put it, "The behavior of the adult toward persons has its genesis in the behavior of the child toward persons. Social behavior is of a piece with all other forms of behavior and is governed by the same laws."¹⁵

THE BACKGROUND OF PARENTAL INTERACTION

Prior to the coming of children, the interactive process is confined to the parents and such other persons as are members of the family; hence the interaction between the child and the family members is built upon this foundation. For this simple reason, the attitudes of the parents toward each other, and the resultant nature of this primary layer of parental interactions, are so important to the child. The second layer, that between parent and child, takes its form from the one on which it is imposed. Moreover, the primary layer of interaction between parents and other elders continues, so that the child-centered processes are continually conditioned and modified by it.

Another reason why the background of parental interattitudes and interaction is so important for the child is the process of *identification*, which students of behavior, beginning with Sigmund Freud, have added to our range of insight. As identified by Freud, this is an un-

¹⁵ Anderson, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

conscious mechanism by which characteristics, real or imaginary, of one person are reproduced in the personality of another. Restated in sociological terms, what this involves is that in any given situation one person plays not only his own but also the role of another person.

It is obvious that identification is a constantly recurring psychological phenomenon, and that in all interactive processes some element of it is present. It is in parent-child interaction that it seems to be most important, because here parental authority and various emotional ties bring pressure to bear, so that often a complete identification may result. Psychoanalysts insist that this identification process appears after the fifth or sixth year, following the repression of infantile sexuality, and that the child now identifies unconsciously with the parent, with a resultant conscious imitation of the parent's behavior.¹⁶ We are not concerned here, however, with the details of this process. Our emphasis is upon four recognized aspects of it: first, that the child identifies with the parent; second, that the child absorbs the attitudes of this parent; third, that much of this process is unconscious; and, fourth, that it appears very early in life.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to identify as yet the specific features of parental interaction which are important for children. One reason is that most of the thinking about them has been of the "trouble repair" kind. What has been identified, and emphasized have been the nature of breaks and the effects of stoppages in the interactive process. There has been little thought of what the qualities of satisfactory parental interaction really are.

Possibly a comparison with the operation of a machine, like an automobile, will be suggestive. The comparison seems not too far fetched, for the users of an automobile base their valuation upon its performance, just as parent-child relations are based upon parental interaction. In both instances these features seem paramount: (1) *Ease and smoothness of operation*. This, in its simplest form, is the essence of freedom for child development. The easier, the freer, the more natural the relations are between parents, the freer is the scope and development of the child-centered interactive process. Lack of these traits in parental interaction diverts attention from the child, and fills parent-child relationships with alien preoccupations. (2) *Continuity of operation*. This, in its simplest form, is the basis of security for the child.

¹⁶ Ives Hendrick, *Facts and Theories of Psychoanalysis*, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., New York, 1934, pp. 50, 159-166.

One may illustrate and amplify this in many ways. The position in which we are employed, the airplane in which we ride, the bank in which our money is placed, the corporation in which we invest, the form of government under which we live—in all of these, the essence of security is continuity of operation. And this is no less true in regard to the intangibles of family life and emotional security. (3) *Integration of parts*. This is the essence of parental effectiveness in child development. It means that in the interactive process between parents there is no friction or conflict or tension, so that each can perform his part in the larger unity of the married state and in the common parental responsibility. By way of summary, it may be said that just as the best-dressed person is the one whose clothes call least attention to the wearer, so the “best” parental relationship is the one which gives the child least concern.

ATTITUDES TOWARD PARENTHOOD

With the coming of children, there are radical changes in the nature and scope of family interaction. These will be discussed in Chapter VII. Basic to these changes and to their significance for the child's development are the attitudes of the parents, first toward parenthood, and second, toward children.

It is one of the pleasing fictions of our culture that every baby is a “bundle of joy,” brought to eager, loving parents; fortunately the fiction becomes fact often enough to justify the retention of this pretense.¹⁷ Proceeding into the realm of reality, one finds that parenthood often is not voluntary, as the recurring role of infanticide and the age-old search for effective contraceptives so clearly prove. Recently, there have been a good many references to parents' acceptance or rejection of the child after its birth, and undoubtedly such reaction is a basic factor affecting the interactive process in the family as well as the child's personality development. However, the matter is by no means so simple as is implied in most of these references, and it is suggested here that the larger question is that of the parents' whole attitude toward parenthood.

This attitude derives from at least five distinct sources. The first is the acceptance or rejection of the idea of parenthood. This question is

¹⁷ Cf. Charles E. King, “Attitudes Toward Marriage and Motherhood of 183 College Women,” *Social Forces*, October, 1943, pp. 89–91; and Gilbert A. Sanford, “A Research Note on Desired Family Size,” *ibid.*, October, 1943, pp. 87–88.

precipitated most often by the coming of the first child. It is the common experience of married couples that their life together begins with a marked sense of fulfillment and release. Both may be slipping out from under the domination of their parents for the first time. There is often a first sense of satisfactory erotic experience. Sex fulfillment affects one appreciably, both physically and psychically. Feelings of frustration, carried through youth, may pass. There is the stimulating sense of new responsibilities. The personality blossoms, the ego expands. Both mates are experimenting with new aspects and areas of life, and as these experiments are successful, life as it is seems complete and satisfactory. Now comes the actuality of pregnancy and the portended arrival of a child. By its very nature this is prone, even under the most favoring circumstances, to produce elements of psychic shock. The child may be wholly wanted, and there is only the shock of responsibility. Or the child may come too soon, so that it breaks in, as it were, upon what the couple had looked upon as a happy, carefree time together. In other cases, the couple has not made a wholly satisfactory adjustment in marriage, and the coming of the child is resented as a permanent commitment to a contract not yet so accepted by both parents. There is at times a deep-seated reluctance on the part of one mate to "mix our blood" with that of the conjugal partner's family. This is often indicated in intercultural, racial, or internativity marriages. Again, a number of students steeped in psychoanalytic lore point out that the coming of a child crystallizes the mother's attitude toward her biological destiny, and that the woman who harbors a lifelong resentment toward being a female is apt per se to resent and reject her child. Finally, in the deepest sense, the acceptance of parenthood involves the acceptance of the idea of self-continuity in the existing world of the individual. To become a parent involves one's acceptance of the world, in all of its stark realities; it means one's projection into the future. The child is the parent's hostage to fortune, a belief in a future worthwhileness.

A second element in the attitude toward parenthood is the attitude toward the individual child. Is the child of the sex that was wanted? What is the parent's reaction to the child's appearance? Does the child suggest, in feature or later in attribute, someone whom the parent likes or dislikes? The answers to these questions have a fundamental bearing upon the acceptance or rejection of the child, not as they affect the assumption of overt parental responsibilities, but as they bear upon the

emotional reaction to the particular child. There is a cold, calculating acceptance of a child, based on economic or personal advantage, a wanting of children because it is the thing to do; and there is a warm, personal, innermost acceptance of them, the essence of which is love. There is a difference, and a very meaningful difference, between the emotional acceptance of a child and the acceptance of parental responsibility, to which we turn next.

The responsibilities of parenthood are enormous and exacting, and the attitude toward the child is influenced by the nature of the parents' reaction to these responsibilities. The particular challenge of these responsibilities has been changed considerably by the growing predominance of the immediate family form, reference to which was made in the preceding chapter. In a kinship group family, the child is reared in the traditional manner, and the mother shares with, and absorbs from, her kinsfolk the necessary knowledge. So, too, there is at least a partial kin group pooling of the material resources required. All this is far different from present-day responsibilities. The science of child rearing has been revolutionized and is still changing. "Handouts" from relatives are not acceptable. The school requires the child's attendance, and the conventional requirements of school life translate themselves into many dollars. The law forbids child labor. Urban housing facilities place sharp limitations upon the size of the family. In other words, whether the family can afford to have another baby is a live question which must be faced with the birth of each child. There is the question of disposition, too. Are the parents willing to accept the demands upon their time, their energy, their financial means, and their pleasure, which parenthood makes? It is significant to note here that clients of birth control clinics largely seek contraceptive aid to limit the number of children rather than to avoid them altogether.

A fourth source of the attitude toward parenthood is to be found in the parent's reaction to the changes in family life which result from the coming of children. The completeness of this change is indicated by the frequency with which one hears parents say: "What did we ever do before the children came?" The coming of a child is like the advent of a new sun or planet into the solar system. The center of family life shifts. A reorientation of relationships follows. The relationship between husband and wife changes. Part of the affectional output is transferred from mate to child. This is particularly likely to happen with the mother, as the common complaint of husbands indicates. If

the erotic relationship suffers, there may be a compensating increase of feelings of respect. Many couples vow never to do so, yet they invariably address each other as father and mother after they have children. Each comes to see the father or mother stereotype in the other. Everything in the home comes to be viewed in relation to the children. Conversation is changed as to objectives, inclusions, and avoidances. In the home there is increasing pressure upon the parent to live up to the stereotype of the parent. To all these changes and demands each parent reacts, and this reaction runs deep into the ultimate attitude toward the child. Such reactions may vary from an almost self-persecuting acceptance to a complete unwillingness to accept; they may result in a parent who is intensely jealous of his child or a genial-appearing one who sits by and in reverie recounts the trips he could take "if it weren't for the children."

Finally there is the parents' willingness or unwillingness to accept the social aureole of parenthood. This term is used to identify society's projection of the idealization of parenthood upon the individual father or mother. The mother and her child in the park, the father and his sons at the football game, the matron and her daughters at the opera—these arouse a distinctive reaction from onlookers. These parents are regarded quite differently from what they would be if they were alone. There is something in the appearance of parent with child that calls forth the warming glow of our approval. We accord them the pathos of the mores.¹⁸

To this social aureole of parenthood there is a reaction of the individual parent. Some parents simply revel in it and take advantage of the "privileges and immunities thereunto appertaining." "Many women," says Waller, "base their whole claim to consideration in this world and the next on the process of parturition."¹⁹ On the other hand there is the young mother who resents being a *jeune fille* no longer, and there is at least one taproom keeper who said to his eight-year-old daughter: "Don't call me daddy when there are ladies about."

Here, then, are five variables in the complex of parenthood. Each of these is a distinct element; each is subject to change, and often does change. Each is approached with a preconception which yields to the modifying force of experience. Moreover, there are two parents, each with his own attitude, and there emerges from their combination yet

¹⁸ Waller, *op. cit.*, p. 462.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 463.

another which is different from either one in isolation. The pattern of the attitude toward parenthood is not a simple thing; indeed, it is quite complex.

THE ATTITUDE TOWARD CHILDREN

There is an attitude toward children, distinct from that toward parenthood, which operates to affect the family interactive process. This attitude again is a complex product, but some of the threads in its creation are quite clear. First is the parents' experience with their own parents. It is often emphasized that parents treat their children the way they were treated by their parents. There is much truth in this statement. Early in life, as the child plays, first perhaps with pets and dolls and then with other children, the game of "papa and mamma" is very popular. In this play, there is much conscious imitation and unconscious retention, and this is largely retained as the child grows older, to reappear when he in turn becomes a parent. There is, however, a more central fact to be noted: The parent repeats the treatment which he received from his parents, as modified in the crucible of experience. For example, many parents make every effort to give their children what they themselves never received, and to use methods that are the opposite of those used with them. The drive in parents to avoid the mistakes perpetrated on them by their parents is often a powerful one, leading them to treat their children far differently from the way their parents treated them.

Perhaps all this is part of the larger pattern of one's philosophy of life. Philosophy follows experience and seeks to justify it. One's philosophy of life may be defined, therefore, as one's personal rationalizations upon the facts of life. In other words, it is a more or less well-defined and -developed system of beliefs, values, principles, etc., which we hold, through which we unify life and give it meaning. It is this philosophy that orients us toward the polar star by which we steer the course of our lives.

Part of this philosophy consists of our conception of people—what they are like, what motivates them, how to deal with them, and so on. Children, of course, are people; hence the philosophy of life, and particularly of human nature and of childhood, which the parents hold is a powerful factor in the creation of their attitude toward children. Does the parent think that children are little animals or that they should be treated like young adults? Does the parent harp constantly on the

virtue of obedience, or does self-control seem the higher good? Can the child be molded according to plan, or is what "is in the blood" his irrevocable destiny?

Important, too, is the parent's adjustment to his own philosophy of life. The simplest way to express this is in terms of the parent's conscience. Glueck wrote about one aspect of this a number of years ago:

Individuals who bring into the marital and parental relation a too rigid and inflexible conscience, whose neurotically exaggerated sense of guilt and need for expiatory punishment exposes them to a life of mean and purposeless denial and asceticism, create a domestic atmosphere that distorts and scars those who are obliged to live and grow within it. A parent of this type is apt to instill in his children a form of perverse morality and ethics that is destructive of happiness. His notions of the duties and privileges of parenthood are of a kind to exclude from the child-parent relationship any possibility of naturalness, of a free interchange of trust and confidence, and to breed secretiveness, distrust, and deception.²⁰

One of the most powerful determinants of the attitude toward children is to be found in the emotional needs of the parents. There is much psychological exploitation of children in the world, chiefly because they are utilized so often to satisfy what the parent does not find elsewhere in life. The love-starved mother who sublimates her need in solicitous devotion to her son; the unhappy mother who watches hawk-like over her daughter's relations with boys; the disillusioned husband whom the neighbors speak of as "such a good father"; and that most solicitous parent in the world, a maiden aunt—these can be observed at every turn, even if what they are doing to the children in their charge is less obvious. Moreover, these more conspicuous cases serve to illustrate what is seldom absent in the parent-child relationship, i.e., the temptation to utilize the tender dependence of the child so as to satisfy the deficiencies in the recesses of one's own being.

One special aspect of this is of particular importance, and that is the degree of life's satisfaction that the parent finds outside the home. Parents who feel frustrated because of their out-of-the-home experiences are apt to seek diligently for compensating satisfactions within their family circle. Glueck calls this the transposition of satisfactions. He writes:

²⁰ Bernard Glueck, "The Significance of Parental Attitudes for the Destiny of the Individual," *Mental Hygiene*, October, 1928, p. 734.

Life offers certain satisfactions that affect primarily our sense of self-esteem, our pride and sense of achievement. These satisfactions are bound up with the personal returns we get from our membership in the social group. They define the degree of esteem in which we are held by our fellow men and the imprint of our ego upon the world about us. Now the sources of these satisfactions lie predominantly in spheres less intimate than in the home circle, and the nature of these satisfactions is different from those that we naturally expect from the family circle.

But sometimes it happens that as a result of certain personality difficulties, specifically those related to the presence of an undue sense of inferiority and timidity, of a general sense of insecurity, an individual feels a strong need for the transposition of these values. His happiness and efficiency as a member of society outside of home relationships are dependent to an undue extent upon getting a kind of return from his business or professional relations which one can expect only from the home circle. Unless his business relations reach a certain degree of warmth, unless he is constantly given evidence by his superiors or associates that they think well of him as a person, that they value him as a friend as well as a business associate, he has a keen sense of privation. Such a person is not apt to promote his opportunities for getting out of life sufficient ego satisfactions. In consequence, he is apt to seek compensatory satisfactions of this type in the circle of the home. He is then apt to exaggerate the virtue and the importance of obedience and submissiveness on the part of the children; he is apt to be unduly tyrannical and egotistical in the exercise of parental authority; and he will in consequence either transmit his own sense of inferiority and timidity to his children or provoke in them a negativistic and rebellious attitude toward sources of authority. Moreover, the marital relations between two people one or both of whom are disposed in this manner are apt to be unhealthy and ineffectual and conducive to an unhealthy home atmosphere.²¹

THE SPIRIT OF FAMILY INTERACTION

Underlying all the other factors in family interaction is the spirit or atmosphere of family life. This is one of the intangibles of life which students, preoccupied with scientific analysis and measurement, tend to avoid. And yet it is far too important a reality to pass by. It is something so real that it strikes the observer almost as soon as he appears upon the family scene. The sacred writings of various people, as well as the masterpieces of literature, have not overlooked these realities of the spirit, and neither should sociologists studying the intimacy of family life. In recent years, students of problem children have said much about the effects of troubled and strained and disturbed "psychic atmosphere"

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 733-734.

in the family backgrounds of their cases. If psychic atmosphere is important in the study of nervous or delinquent children, it seems equally important to emphasize the role of family spirit in normal child development.

Santayana, the philosopher, writing at the close of his life, gives us an excellent illustration of this.

After my mother and sisters left, my uncle Santiago, with his wife Maria Josefa and his daughter Antonita, came to live with us, and a new and distinct chapter begins in my experience. The scene, the persons, the events are still present with me most vividly. I didn't feel deeply or understand what was going on, but somehow the force of it impressed my young mind and established there a sort of criterion or standard of reality. That crowded, strained, disunited, and tragic family life remains for me the type of what life really is: something confused, hideous and useless. I do not hate it or rebel against it, as people do who think they have been wronged. It caused me no suffering; I was a child carried along as in a baby-carriage through the crowd of strangers. I was neither much bothered nor seriously neglected: and my eyes and ears became accustomed to the unvarnished truth of the world, neither selected for my instruction nor hidden from me for my benefit.²²

The spirit of family life is compounded of many ingredients, some obvious and clear in the consciousness of the members of the family, but others buried in the unawareness of a deep mental hinterland. The turned-up nose of daughter Sue, the son's mischievous brown eyes, the mother's forgotten experience with a brown-eyed lover, the deepness of father's voice, sister Kay's lilting laughter, the wiggling stump of the tail of the family's cocker spaniel, the peaceful glow of candlelight at the evening dinner table, a roaring fire in the grate, father's deep satisfaction with his work, and mother's patent satisfaction with daddy—to some these may appear as incidental minutiae of family life. Clearer insight may recognize them as of the greatest importance. Moreover, it is not only the persons and elements which are present in the interactive process, but each is the focal point of past experience. As Dollard has reminded us, to the concept of the family as a unity of interacting personalities should be added the phrase, "each with a history."²³ It is, then, out of this miscellany—of persons and things, present and past, obvious and subtle, remembered and forgotten—that there emanates

²² George Santayana, *Persons and Places*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1944, p. 119.

²³ John Dollard, "Needed Viewpoints in Family Research," *Social Forces*, October, 1935, p. 110.

from and pervades the family interactive process a certain essence which is the spirit of the family process. It is one of the basic realities of family life.

SUMMARY

The salient points in this chapter may be summarized briefly as follows:

1. Family life may be viewed as an interactive process between its members. As such, it is a peculiar form of social interaction, distinguished by the intimacy, deep community, and brutal incisiveness of its relationships.

2. Family interaction proceeds not only at the intellectual but also at the sensory and the emotional level. This tripartite nature is responsible for its fundamental importance.

3. In the constant interplay between family members, the child's personality takes form. Common contributions of the interactive process to the child are (a) satisfaction of the desire for intimate response, (b) a stage for the development of the child's ability, (c) the approval of one's kind, (d) the first lessons in living with other persons, (e) determination of personal attitudes, (f) tools for the acquisition of an education, and (g) living habits.

4. The base of family interaction is the nature of the relationship between the parents and other adults in the family group.

5. Parent-child interaction is greatly influenced by the attitudes of parents toward parenthood and children.

6. Underlying all other factors in family interaction is the spirit or atmosphere of family life—subtle, difficult to measure, but all-pervasive in scope and fundamental in importance.

Interaction Between the Siblings



The family is a miniature society. In this society there are three sets of relationships: those between the adult members, usually the parents; those between parents and children; and those between the children. Each of these is distinct, even though they overlap and modify each other. In the preceding chapter, family interaction was considered primarily in terms of parent-child relationships; the present chapter is devoted to interaction between the siblings.

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF SIBLING RELATIONSHIPS

The relations between children in the same family are much like the relationships of the adult world. The children of the family, then, are fellow citizens of this miniature world, and in it they receive from each other experience in human living together. Stated in this general manner, the family shares this function with all the other agencies in which children meet with each other. All the child's life—at home, visiting in another home, in school, etc.—is experience in living with other people. There are, however, in the sibling relationships within the family certain features which are unique and important, and which make such experience within the family unlike in character and importance the experience gained elsewhere.

One of these distinguishing features of the relations between siblings is their inclusive character. This inclusiveness has, for example, a time aspect. Children in the same family may play together, work together, be together for longer periods of time per day, week, and year, than is the case with most other relationships. This fact, and its meaning for children, is generally overlooked by adults. Parents are prone to gloss over, as a pleasant surcease from responsibility, the hours their children play together. When the inevitable quarrels arise, the parents

think of them as a problem of jealousy, casting its shadow over what should be a juvenile Eden. What parents fail rather generally to appreciate in such cases are the facts from the standpoint of the children: that such quarrels and disagreements arise between two personalities, even if juvenile, who are forced to spend many long hours with each other, usually with definite limitations of space, object, and interest. It would be an interesting problem in research to compare adults and children in this respect. Suppose, for example, one were to observe three children at play for 500 hours, on a sun porch, with eight toys. The number and duration of quarrels should be noted carefully. Then repeat the experiment with three unselected adults, for an equal period and under similar limitations of space and object, and again note the number and duration of quarrels. This might be an enlightening study in the relative behavior problems of children and adults.

A second aspect of the inclusiveness of the sibling relationship is the range of contacts included. Depending upon circumstances, children in the same family eat together, bathe together, share the same room, play with the same toys, wear each other's clothes, and have various other contacts. This suggests the third aspect, i.e., the peculiar intimacy of the contacts between siblings. They cover, in other words, every aspect of life. Here again a study in comparisons might yield intriguing results. It would be enlightening to study the relationships of adults compelled to live together for long periods of time, in the most comprehensive and intimate contact, and without the redeeming bond of romantic attraction. Certainly such studies would enable us to see "the problem of the jealous child" in a proper perspective—and possibly our own.

Next to its intimate nature is the stark frankness of the sibling relationship. It is not one of company manners, with doting parents hovering near to smooth out tangles and irregularities. Relationships between siblings permit little or no dissembling. In the parlance of the baseball world, each solves the delivery of the other early in the game. No tricks will suffice, no deception will work. Siblings come to know each other like a book. They come to live largely with each other—to use the vernacular again—"with their hair down." Life among siblings is like living in the nude, psychologically speaking.

Living in this miniature society with fellows of one's own relative age and status does much for the child. To begin with, it serves to bring him into, and to keep him in, the world of reality. It is easy for

children who play alone and with inanimate objects to live in a world of make-believe, to invent companions with whom to play. Many only children do so. This is far less likely to happen when there are other children of a near age in the family. Such siblings serve as a constant crude awakening. The reality of an annoying younger brother crowds out the imaginary pal. The introvert tendency is not apt to be encouraged, for example, in a family of six children born within ten years.

The negative side of this service might be noted: the fact that siblings act as substitutes for parents. To put the matter with blunt directness, they save each other from being with parents and other adults too much. When there are several children in a family, they will inevitably spend much time with each other and less with the parents. The significance of this is that they are kept from the unnatural environment which the adult furnishes. Parents and other adults are less satisfactory companions for children than are other children because children treat each other more like equals. Parents and other adults are apt to be oversolicitous, less understanding, more condescending, less interesting, more tired and abstracted, to offer a protected form of competition, and in many ways to afford a less healthy environment for a child's normal development.

Other possible advantages are obvious. Children may stimulate each other's creative interests. It is always true that two minds are better than one, and that in their interplay each stimulates the other. There are, of course, the inevitable rivalries between siblings. They may be friendly and wholesome, or they may be of the frankest bitterness. The turn which these rivalries take is likely to depend upon the larger family situation, upon the wisdom of the parents and their relations with each other. In some families, such rivalries are utilized and maintained at a stimulating level; in others, whole family groups may be divided into two camps, with the children lining up on one side or the other.

Living with other children in the home from the earliest days insures an abiding appreciation of the rights of others. This appreciation comes in large measure through conflict. Parents are annoyed often, and quite distressed at times, by these conflicts, but conflict is to a great degree the inevitable accompaniment of the process whereby the child learns to live and work with others. There may be many squabbles before the taking of turns is established, but in the end the child will have learned the lesson of limiting his demands in the presence of

others. It is unfortunate to have brother break the choicest doll, and some hours of warfare may result; but how better can be achieved a vivid sense of the doll's value and of responsibility for the care of someone else's choice doll?

EDUCATIONAL ASPECTS OF SIBLING RELATIONSHIPS

The family is a miniature school in which the children, particularly the older ones, act as teachers to each other. There is much reason to think that, as far as instruction in the ways of meeting child life problems is concerned, the older brother or sister is often a more effective and wiser teacher than the adult. Children understand each other, often better than adults do; their interests and problems are common; they speak the same language, as it were; and they have the same general kind of experiences. Thus it comes about that an older brother's or sister's estimate of parent, teacher, policeman, or grandparent is keener than that of the parents, and is almost invariably more likely to be accepted by the other child or children. One of the distinct advantages enjoyed by younger children in a family is to be "tipped off" or "taught the ropes" by the older siblings. This takes the form of practical and concrete information on how to meet life's problems.

As this is being written, the author had the privilege of reading a verbatim report of a conversation between two sisters, aged nine and seven years respectively, and recorded without their knowledge. The conversation had to do with a controversy raging on the school playground and involving second- and third-grade children. This inter-sibling discussion covered the following points: (1) analysis of the issue and how it arose; (2) a characterization of the chief personalities involved; (3) reasons for the existing line-up; (4) questions of strategy; (5) what would be involved if the sisters took opposing sides; and (6) a final compromise, as the result of which both agreed to delay decision for the time being. Throughout the entire conversation, which took place over a lengthy period while both were playing in their sandbox at home, the older child was contributing constantly to the younger child's knowledge both of the issues and of human nature, drawing on her longer experience in the school.

The family is a school of mirrors, often. Children are apt to see themselves in their brothers and sisters. "Your nose is like Bill's." "You mouth your words like sister." "Jimmy and you both look like the Brown side of the family." Children who hear statements like these

from infancy on early come to realize that a brother or sister is enough like one so that one can see and hear oneself. This is a helpful device, particularly at the time one begins the process of making oneself over. It is an excellent help for purposes of self-correction and self-discipline. Possibly those modern teachers who would develop personal traits and habits in students through the use of moving pictures first got the idea from living in a large family where the children were much alike and where they could see themselves reflected in their next of kin.

Life among siblings is a school of many lessons. Not only is each child teacher, pupil, and supervisor, but each one differs from the other in age, sex possibly, interests, temperament, and range of activities. Each makes his or her own contributions, each presents distinctive problems. Moreover, each one is growing, and rapidly at that. The result is that the contributions and problems of each are constantly changing. All this demands constant adjustments and readjustments. Living comes then to involve a whole series of little crises and of adjustments in small things. Developed as a habit, facility in the making of adjustments makes correspondingly easier the solution of the more serious problems of adolescent and adult life. The old adage, "Practice makes perfect," holds good here. Life among siblings may be a hard school, with long hours of apprenticeship, a great range of possible conflicts, and demands for constant application, but facility in the arts comes in just this way.

EMOTIONAL SATISFACTIONS

Some of the contributions of children to each other within the family fall in the field of subjective satisfactions. These are difficult to put into objective form, and any effort to describe them may expose one to the charge of not being objectively scientific. But it is pleasant for most children to have other children in the home; it is satisfying to know that there are others of your kind; it is a comfort to have another person of your relative age and status and bound to you by bonds of blood, available in your home to share your thoughts if not your toys. Perhaps much of this may be reduced, in the final analysis, to the much-discussed and -emphasized factor of a sense of security. Children in the same family give each other a sense of security. It is sort of a psychological prop to know that there are other Smith children beside your-

self. Children in the same family behave rather as is the custom of English folk: perfectly willing to abuse each other and the Empire but invariably making common cause against the outsider.

There is, then, a sense of support, of consolation, of spiritual renewal that may come from a fellow sibling; opportunity to talk things over, intimately, frankly, with one's own kind—at odd moments, late at night, incidentally, while at play. There is a feeling of belonging, of not being isolated, of being fellow members of a group whose interests are irrevocably bound up together. And it is this sense of security, this feeling of belonging, this conviction of the certainty of support which builds itself through succeeding days into the foundations of mental hygiene.

THE ONLY CHILD

What children in the same family contribute to each other may be brought out in a reverse manner by considering the problems of the only child, who, by way of contrast, receives no such contributions. Almost one-fifth of all completed families (wife forty-five years of age or over) today have only one child, a tenfold increase during the past two centuries. The only child thus not only presents a valuable study by way of contrast, but represents, on a quantitative basis, a highly important problem in child behavior.

Both popular comment and scientific analysis agree that the only child differs in certain respects from other children. This is perhaps the first distinctive fact about the only child: that he has always been identified as different and been singled out for discussion. There is an extensive literature on the only child, with some considerable differences of opinion. But through this literature there is a continuing recognition of him as a problem. Fenton, one of the students of the problem, concludes that one may expect a priori that all only children will be problems of one kind or another.¹ Both popular and scientific comment agrees in general on the nature of the problem. Popular opinion, speaking in terms of overt behavior, identifies two types: children who are "spoiled," egocentric, difficult, and unsocial; and those who are sensitive, isolated, hesitant, and unduly dependent upon

¹N. Fenton, "The Only Child," *Pedagogical Seminary*, December, 1928, pp. 546 ff.

their parents. The scientific literature, thinking in terms of causative factors, emphasizes, first, that the only child lacks necessary association with other children; and, second, that he receives too much attention from his parents.²

Concerning the traits and types of behavior usually considered of social importance, there is somewhat less agreement. The nature of the studies which have been made and the shift in the conclusions reached can best be revealed by brief summaries of five of these studies. (1) In 1898, on the basis of 481 cases, Bohannon concluded that only children were below average in health and vitality; suffered more frequently from physical or mental disorders; entered school later, were more irregular in attendance, did below average work; joined less in group work; and were noticeable for peculiarities, precocities, selfishness, and affectations.³ (2) Neal, writing in 1927 on the basis of the experience of the Los Angeles Child Guidance Clinic, affirmed this characterization. The only child is usually a problem child, is "jealous, selfish, egotistical, dependent, aggressive, domineering or quarrelsome."⁴ (3) Fenton in 1928 published studies whose conclusions were rather different. His investigations were based on 193 unselected elementary-school children, of whom 34 were only children, and 512 university students, of whom 73 were only children. His method was to use teachers' ratings on twelve traits of these individuals. He concludes that only children were only little more selfish and unsocial, more unpopular with their schoolmates, slightly less obedient, somewhat more inclined to be leaders, to be self-confident and aggressive. On the whole, while recognizing their handicaps and behavior, he insists that the picture has been magnified in the past.⁵ (4) Bellerose, studying 25 only, youngest, oldest, and middle children referred to a habit clinic, concluded that only children were not unique, although they showed a larger occurrence of food fads and temper spells.⁶ (5) Ward, analyzing 100 case records of only children living with their parents and referred to child guidance clinics in large cities, found that the only children

² Anne Ward, "The Only Child," *Smith College Studies in Social Work*, September, 1930, p. 41.

³ E. W. Bohannon, "The Only Child in a Family," *Pedagogical Seminary*, April, 1898, pp. 306-310.

⁴ Eva Neal, "The Only Child," *Mental Hygiene Bulletin*, November, 1927, pp. 1-3.

⁵ Fenton, *op. cit.*, pp. 546-556.

⁶ Dorothy Bellerose, *Behavior Problems of Children*, Thesis, Smith College School for Social Work, 1927.

were notably younger than clinic children as a whole; ranked higher in intelligence; were less subject to stealing, lying, and truancy; were more restless, overactive; and had more school difficulties.⁷

What these and other studies agree on is that the only child tends to be characterized by certain attitudes and traits which handicap his adjustment to his fellows and result in behavior that naturally follows such handicaps. What they do not agree on is how frequent and how serious these traits are. Why they disagree in this respect is probably to be explained in terms of differences in the data upon which they worked. There obviously were differences in the bases used for selection of the cases; the identification and tabulation of traits varied; and the times and places of the studies were different.

Going beyond the statistical judgments of tabulated cases, one finds rather general agreement on the elements in the domestic background which are peculiar to only children. In other words, whatever the outcome in the case of any individual child, the existence of certain common hazards or handicaps is generally recognized; five of these will be summarized briefly. (1) The only child does not have other children with whom to play and compete, within the intimate world of the family. He lacks, say all students of him, just those experiences and lessons emphasized in our preceding summary of what children in the same family give each other. He is not schooled in the lessons of living with his kind, i.e., with other children of his age, ability, and type.⁸ (2) There are hazards to his emotional development. The psychoanalytic school emphasizes this point. The emotional demands of the parents converge upon the only child—an unnatural emotional demand upon an immature person. Also, the only child never has anybody to threaten the security of his libido fixation on the parent of the opposite sex.

(3) His parents are apt to be overly solicitous. Part of this oversolicitude for the only child is that which is ordinarily focused upon the first-born. Parents with several children who will remember their concern for their first-born in contrast with that for the subsequent children, will be particularly able to appreciate this fact. But a good deal of this oversolicitude grows out of circumstances peculiar to the case of the only child. Only children are often born to marriages contracted late in life; or to women, who, after several miscarriages, have

⁷ Ward, *op. cit.*, pp. 41-66.

⁸ Smiley and Margaret Blanton, *Child Guidance*, D. Appleton-Century Company, Inc., New York, 1927, pp. 175-176.

finally had a child and face the impossibility of having another; or who, after years of sterility, have achieved motherhood, but with no promise of additional children. In these and other cases, the natural anxiety for the first-born combines with the exaggerated concern for the only child. This oversolicitude may take many forms. There often is an abnormal concern about the health of the child. Not infrequently there is too much praise for any minor achievement. Or there may be interference with the most minute activities of the child's life. The oversolicitous parental situation will be discussed more adequately in a subsequent chapter.

(4) Just as parents of only children are thrown too much with and upon the child, so the only child is thrown too much with and upon his parents. There is too early a shift to adult activities and interests, because no childish activities and interests are available in the home. This fosters precocity and explains the frequency of leadership, as well as unpopularity, among only children. (5) It must be recognized, on the other hand, that the only child has certain distinct advantages. Ordinarily, his economic position is better than it would be if there were other children. This may mean more toys, better educational opportunities, more and better clothing. Parents of such a child have more time to devote to his supervision and guidance. They show in many ways that they expect a great deal from him, since he is the only one.

VARIATIONS IN CONTRIBUTIONS OF CHILDREN TO EACH OTHER

In a preceding chapter it was pointed out that what the child gives his parents is a highly individual matter, depending upon a great many factors that operate both on the parents and on the child. Obviously, the same is true in regard to the contributions of children in the same family to each other; the discussion of such contributions would be incomplete without reference to the more important of these factors. Accordingly, five such factors are selected for brief analysis at this point.

The Nature of the Children.

Just as the contributions which the adults with whom we live can make to us as personalities vary with the persons concerned, so what siblings contribute to each other is dependent upon the siblings—their nature and how they regard and affect each other. Each child is a

distinctive person, responding in his own ways to life. Siblings may be so different in ability, appearance, and temperament that the very laws of heredity and social interaction seem capricious. Many people, including parents and students of family-child relationships, seem to act as if the Smith children, like Ford automobiles in an assembly plant, are all alike originally, only at some later time beginning to show differences on the basis of the "wear and tear of life." This, of course, is not true. The children in the Smith family, like those in any other, are distinctive individuals to begin with, and their conditioning experiences only accentuate these differences. Once this individual character of every child in the family is kept in mind, it follows as a matter of course that each sibling will have his own distinctive relation to, and effect upon, every other sibling. Not infrequently, one outstanding trait may color the whole relationship. The dull child is ridiculed by the brighter sibling. The sensitive child is teased by a cowardly brother. The stronger child is expected to fight the other's battle, the more daring one is looked up to to pull the filial chestnuts out of the paternal fire, the "cutter" of the sisters begs for nickels and dimes for both. Illustrations of the significance of conspicuous traits like these serve to emphasize how in lesser degree and in more subtle manner facts about the nature of children are important to an understanding of their relations with each other.

The Nature of the Home Situation

Situations in the home affect intersibling relations in many ways. First of all is the obvious role of living arrangements. These may be of a kind to minimize friction and irritation. Each child may have his own room, toys, play space, and shelves and closets for his own clothing and possessions; on the other hand, four children may share the same room, and even the same bed, creating a situation which is bound to complicate and render sibling relationships difficult. Again, living arrangements may be wholesome in character and in consequence; conversely, they may be unhealthy to the core. Often children sleep with siblings of the opposite sex, for example. A good many behavior problems that come to clinics have this background, and analyses of the facts indicate that such living arrangements are not always due to the compulsion of poverty.

Favoritism on the part of a parent or adult member of the household may put the relations between siblings on an entirely different basis

than would otherwise obtain. The literature on parent-child relationships is replete with evidence on this point. Moreover, the favoritism need not be forthright and overt; it may be unconscious and confined to incidental and indirect expression. Children are uncanny in their discernment of the subtleties of preference. Again, relations between children in the same family are influenced greatly by the attitudes of the family as a whole toward the particular siblings involved. Mother, for example, tells Mrs. Brown, who lives next door, that Jack is neat and orderly and puts the blocks back in their box when he has finished his play, but Bill never does. Sister Penelope, aged sixteen, hears this and repeats it. Aunt Martha tells the cook, the cook tells the laundress, and finally daddy hears it, too. Meanwhile, Jack and Bill have been hearing it, and acting accordingly. The family attitude is definite on this point, now: Jack is orderly, and Bill is not. Whatever the degree of fact originally, as the attitude was crystallizing, the fact kept pace with it. Soon Jack assumes a responsible role about the blocks, and a protective one toward Bill. A relationship now crystallizes, as did the attitude underlying it. Whatever the concrete circumstances, the central point to be emphasized here is that a child is apt to adopt or be influenced by the family attitude about the other sibling. In some cases, both the attitude and its absorption may be quite unconscious; in other cases, it is definite and consciously arrived at.

Differences in Ages of Siblings.

Child spacing has been emphasized primarily in relation to the infant mortality rate, the health of the mother and child, and the convenience of parents; one of the distinct advantages claimed for the birth control movement is its contributions to these designated ends. Not much attention, on the other hand, has been given to the relationship between child spacing and sibling relations. The question is important, and is destined to receive increasing attention with progress in family planning. Is it better, from the standpoint of sibling harmony, for children in a family to come one, or two, or three, or more years apart? Many parents discuss this as a problem, speculate about it, have decided ideas about it, and proceed to have their families accordingly; but concrete and objective evidence is lacking. Certain aspects are fairly obvious. The range and extent of contacts vary inversely with the time span between the birth of siblings. All other things being equal, children born ten months apart will have more in common than those born after a

ten-year intervening period. Close companionship is more likely between siblings near in age; those separated by too long a period tend to grow up in separate worlds, as it were. But many questions remain. At what age, or ages, can the first-born adjust most readily to the appearance of another child? Is there a time interval most propitious for the third child, in relation to the birth of the second one? Is there a time interval after which children begin to resent quite openly the appearance of another child? If the time interval between children is long, for what dangers ought one to be on the lookout? When is there danger of the older sibling becoming a parent substitute? At what age can an older child most readily be expected to assume responsibility for a younger brother or sister? Is there any specific age, or is it always a matter of individual variations? These are questions that await the hand of the research worker.

Differences in the Sex of Siblings.

It must be obvious that differences in the sex of the children in the same family constitute an important factor in determining their possible contributions to each other. The consequences of this factor are mostly of two kinds. In the first place, there is the effect upon the range of common interests. Early in life, boys and girls become interested in different games, contacts, and activities of all sorts. The objectives of the sexes begin early to differ, as do also the kinds of training to which they are submitted. Perhaps distinctions of this sort become less pronounced with the equalization of opportunities between the sexes in our schools and in other socioeconomic pursuits, but many differences in the lives and interests of the sexes remain and continue to evidence themselves early in life. The second way in which sex influences the interrelationships between siblings is through what Adler calls the masculine tradition of our culture. This tradition, says Adler, acts as a definite impulsion toward certain attitudes organized principally around the assumption by the male of his own superiority, and the acceptance, however grudging and reluctant, by the female of her own inferiority of position.⁹ Here is an illustration, in other words, of how society and the family influence relations between siblings through the attitudes which they create. There are, for example, one set of standards for boys and another for girls. The distinction is made openly, with the

⁹ Alfred Adler, *Individual Psychology*, Harcourt, Brace & Company, Inc., New York, 1925, pp. 322 ff.

knowledge of all concerned, and on the basis of the sex difference. Boys are indulged in privileges which are denied to girls, they are exposed to realities in life from which girls are sheltered, the distribution of opportunities and facilities in a family is often decided on a sex basis.¹⁰ Such distinctions, and the attitudes which accompany them, influence the relations between siblings and what they are going to give each other as fellow members of the family.

Difference in Order of Birth.

The importance of the individual's position in the family on the basis of order of birth has been recognized by students of behavior. In part, this importance grows out of the differences in the parents' attitudes toward children on this basis, but much of it grows out of its effect upon relationships between the children themselves. No one who has had the experience of living as a child in a family in which there are other children will deny that their relations with each other are influenced at every turn by the order of their appearance in the family. Family conversation is replete with references to it. Adults, speaking of their earlier experiences, constantly refer to it. Recognition by scientists of its role in the development of behavior is surprising, therefore, solely in the belated emphasis upon it. To facilitate a brief, suggestive analysis of some of the ways in which it may be effective, reference will be made here to the situation, in this respect, of the first child, the in-between child, and the last or youngest child.

1. The first child has per se certain unique experiences. One of these is that he begins life as an only child. All the other children miss this experience. Until other children arrive, the first-born is alone, in the center of the stage. His adjustments are only to adults. He learns to accommodate only to older persons. These older persons are apt to be pliant and tolerant. Usually it is their first experience with parenthood. Their behavior is prone to be tentative. They proceed experimentally. The first is the practice child.

Then comes the arrival of the second child. This presents a crisis, and it occurs usually with devastating suddenness. All his life the oldest child has ruled as king or queen; and then, one day, in the midst of tense excitement, he is dethroned. "The king is dead. Long live the king." Most often, all this happens, as far as the first child can under-

¹⁰ Weill, Blanche, *The Behavior of Young Children of the Same Family*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1928, pp. 34-35.

stand, without warning. There is no preparation, but suddenly a *fait accompli*. It is in this connection that the time interval between births becomes important. Reference has already been made to this factor. It is particularly important in the case of the oldest child, because it determines the severity of the crisis. It is in this connection, too, that the whole process of sex education of young children, and of adroit manipulation of family situations by the parents, becomes important. There are families in which, as has been pointed out, the second and subsequent children arrive without any preparation in the minds of the prior-born. On the other hand, there are families in which the children, when quite young, have an understanding of the processes of birth and are led, skillfully and sympathetically, to await and accept the changing physical condition of their mother in pregnancy as well as the arrival of the new brother or sister. Unfortunately, such cases are relatively rare; in most families the oldest child faces dethronement and the coming of a rival with inadequate preparation.

The oldest child must adjust to this situation, and the effort to do so furnishes the key to many behavior problems which afflict the family in subsequent days. His first effort generally is to regain the attention that has been diverted from him to the new arrival. This may take the form of intensifying past performances or developing new techniques. What the dethroned child early senses is that it is the very helplessness of his rival that seems to account for his extraordinary success in gaining attention. This is a technique the older child understands. He, too, succeeded when he utilized it. He will try it all again. There is, for example, the food technique. His parents were once so concerned that he eat well and regularly. Now they are devoting much effort to the feeding of his rival. Suddenly, he does not eat. Many parents immediately become alarmed. The child may be ill. He will not grow if he does not eat. He will become restless and cry if he does not eat. They plead, threaten, scold, argue, tempt. Ah, sweet victory. Attention has been regained. The faithless parents have been shown the error of their way. The food tyranny technique is but one of many. The struggle to establish toilet habits delivers another weapon into the hands of the young warrior.¹¹ He cannot but notice the considerable attention that is devoted to the new arrival because of his lack of such habits. Why, questions an awakening intelligence, should he be exemplary in his toilet habits when their absence in his rival has such attention-

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 196 ff.

getting powers? Thus may arise enuresis, another solution for outraged babyhood.

Food, toilet habits, crying, temper tantrums are ready tyrannies for the dethroned child to use. But the possibilities do not end with such obvious weapons. There is a good deal of reason to think that less simple devices are utilized, such as the anxiety symptoms which loom so large in the literature of child behavior. These symptoms include nightmares, nail biting, restless sleep, stammering, excessive shyness, neurotic vomiting, negativism, fantasies, and the like. It is not implied that these are to be explained solely on this ground, but they do all have this common element: they are effective in attracting attention from other children and centering it upon the subject with the symptom.

With the passing of time, this situation with its aspects of displacement and jealousy changes to one with possibilities of an entirely different sort for the oldest child. This new situation is replete with elements which make for the development of leadership. With the coming and growth of younger children, the oldest child naturally assumes such a position. Ordinarily he is older, bigger, stronger. And what is of outstanding importance in the eyes of the younger children is that he is the one who does things first. It is he who is first allowed that prime adventure of contemporary urban children—crossing the street alone.¹² He goes to school first, contacts the teachers, learns the ropes. He is the pioneer, the pathfinder, the trail blazer. He sets the pace. More than that, he comes to be a sort of top sergeant in the familial company, assuming a certain oversight of the behavior and disciplinary problems of the younger children. It is this type of situation which lies back of Adler's statement: "There exists a fundamental difference in the psychic development of the first-born as compared with that of the second or last-born child. I have always found that the first-born possesses a sort of conservative tendency. He takes the element of power always into consideration, comes to an understanding with it and exhibits a certain amount of sociability. He regards his superiority over his brothers and sisters as his inviolable position."¹³

It is this situation, possibly, which explains the higher rate of suc-

¹² As this is being written, my younger daughter volunteers to do errands of all kinds. In due course of time, her mother and I learn the reason for this sudden diligence. It is to cross the streets alone, a privilege just accorded to her but enjoyed by her sister for more than a year. Subsequently, we learn that this disparity has loomed large in her mind for months.

¹³ Adler, *op. cit.*, p. 321.

cess and achievement of the oldest child, as indicated in many studies. Most of these studies have been based on data in *Who's Who* and in English and American Men of Science compilations. It would be interesting to supplement these more formal and outstanding studies with some based on data before one's very eyes. Are successful athletes in high schools and colleges more likely to be oldest children? Is there any relation between fighting battles for your younger brothers and sisters and your achievement in job status? Are an undue proportion of professional fighters and wrestlers oldest children or oldest sons?

Younger brothers and sisters play possibly a significant role in the mental hygiene of the oldest and elder children, in that they offer the latter a chance for catharsis and compensation. All the hurts, humiliations, disappointments, and frustrations experienced by the oldest child in the course of contacts with older children in other families can be "taken out" on the younger brother and sister. This seems to be a universal healing process. Holders of Ph.D. degrees, no matter how rebellious against the requirements for the degree before it is awarded, stand adamant afterward on the necessity of maintaining "high standards." Fathers who are bullied by employers turn sadist with their children; women, browbeaten by their husbands, become terrors with their children. One sees this particularly clearly in watching the play of children. What the nine-year-olds endure from the eleven-year-olds they tend to wreak on the seven-year-olds. It is a healing process, to pass pain along.

There is reason to think that the oldest child in a family of some size is peculiarly schooled in certain specific traits. There comes early a growing sense of responsibility for the younger children as they arrive, and a sense of power, too, augmented and intensified with each new addition; but more than these, there seems to come also a certain perspective in viewing life and its processes. There is the oldest child's own poignant experience when the second-born arrives, to which adjustment must be made; as time goes on, this is repeated in a sense in the case of each succeeding child as it is dethroned. From the repetition of these experiences, once shared and then observed in others within the intimate relationships of the family, there comes an insight into life and an ability to view it with objectivity and understanding that is found more frequently possibly in the oldest child in larger families than elsewhere.

Finally, the oldest child receives from the younger children in the

same family certain incentives of both a stimulating and a restraining sort which, operating often in involved and subtle fashion, tend nevertheless because of their persistence to be of considerable importance. These grow out of the fact that, while priority in order of birth confers a position of leadership, this leadership must be maintained, not only against the younger children but against children in other families. The oldest child is expected to jump farther, climb higher, draw better houses, spell more words, etc., than the other children in the family; and he dare not, if he is to retain his prestige, be outclassed in these things by children of comparable age and status in other families. It is not implied that the oldest child always succeeds in doing all these things, it is not even likely that there is much conscious appreciation of the situation; the whole point is that the situation is there and that its implications, consciously felt or not, tend to encourage and stimulate such performances on his part. But there are also certain restraining elements in this situation. The oldest child is expected to excel, but in good deeds only. He always carries in the minds of his younger brothers and sisters, and possibly in his own, a certain responsibility for the behavior of the younger children. "Bill did it, so I thought it was O. K.," says Robert, who is two years younger. The younger children like to "get something" on the older ones, particularly on the oldest one. Such information can always be used to advantage. In summary, then, the oldest child is generally "on the spot," as is the leader of any group, to perform a little better and to act a little more circumspectly than his younger followers.

2. The in-between child, as such, encounters situations different from those of the first-born, and from the very beginning. The parents have a different attitude, because they have had a child before him. On the basis of their experience with the first-born, certain very definite ideas about child rearing may have taken form. Many parents begin rearing the second child with no other idea than repeating their experiences with the first one. In some cases, this view is not modified; in other cases, only slowly and almost resentfully. On the whole, then, the in-between child has less of a trial-and-error rearing than the first; his parents are less tolerant, more confident, more positive and sure about themselves.

In the next place, the in-between child enters a more complex family situation than did his predecessor, for he finds not simply the parents but also the personality of the first-born. This other child whom he

finds and with whom he must henceforth live, with no choice of his own, is and invariably continues to be bigger and stronger than he, with greater liberty of action and with constant priority in life's experiences. To make matters worse—and it is a matter of no small moment—so many of his dearest possessions come to him secondhand. The first-born got the play pen when it was new; the other children also use it subsequently. Mary had the doll when it was new; Helen, a year and a half younger, gets it minus a leg, some hair, and the left eyebrow. Jack wore the overcoat when it was new; Bill, two years younger, will get it this fall if Jack has surely outgrown it. Thus, through the span of childhood and over a range of possessions, the second and subsequent children in most families get the used, the soiled, the made-over, the secondhand toys, clothing, beds, books, and the like. In many families the children born after the first one grow to maturity with only few new articles of play or attire. Obviously, we have as yet but little appreciation of what this means to the children involved, and its role in the molding of their personalities.

Another specific factor in the lives of children other than the first-born grows out of the fact that the oldest child blazes the trail and sets the pace for the other children in matters educational.¹⁴ The nature and school work of Mary, the first of the Tweed children, set the original pattern of association in the minds of teachers between the name Tweed and the behavior and performance of their children. Helen, the second of the Tweeds, comes to be spoken of as Mary Tweed's sister. She does as well as Mary, or better, or not so well. Henceforth, all the Tweed progeny are measured by the yardstick of Mary's performance. (And woe for the subsequent Tweeds if Mary set a high standard of measurement. Here is the genesis of many behavior problems.) Moreover, this is repeated as the Tweeds pass from grade to grade. Years later, Helen has graduated from college and is herself a teacher. One day, she presents herself to the dean of the graduate school. "Oh, yes," says the dean, "I'm pleased to see you. You are Mary Tweed's sister." And absent-mindedly he calls her Mary several times during their brief interview.

Meanwhile, there comes the in-between child's dethronement, when the next baby comes along. He now experiences what he precipitated for the oldest child. And yet his experience is different, for he is being

¹⁴ Alice Leahy, "Emphasis in Psychiatric Social Case Work," *Mental Hygiene*, October, 1926, pp. 743-750.

attacked from both the front and the rear. The new baby comes from behind to steal his status of being the baby of the family, with all the rights and privileges thereunto appertaining, while in front of him is this older, bigger, stronger, more experienced child.

And so it is throughout all his life as a member of the family. Always in front is this child with whom he never catches up, who always assumes this lordship or oversight over him as a matter of unquestioned right. Always, behind, is this other child, younger, smaller, more helpless, the "baby" of the family. What a struggle the in-between child has, just to be somebody, to be a distinct person instead of just a later edition of the eldest sibling or a transitional link between someone above and someone below in the upward climb of family life.

Caught thus between an upper and a lower millstone, as it were, three possible choices are open to the in-between child. One is to drive himself forward, hard, relentlessly, to catch up with or to overcome the oldest child. Given an in-between child with energy and a certain capacity for development, this is very apt to be the line followed—continuous endeavor under full steam. It is this which leads Adler to remark that the restless neurotics are, to a preponderant degree, second-born children.¹⁵ A second possibility is to criticize and depreciate the older child, and thus attempt to equalize the struggle. Envious depreciation is the weapon of the less competent. You build yourself up by tearing down your competitor. Thus arise those lasting animosities, that guerrilla type of warfare, that prevails in some families between siblings. This subject of sibling rivalry is significant. Mead terms it the typical expression of the American attitude toward success. In the prevailing type of small, immediate family, the American child is constantly being compared with other children on the normal frequency curve of community statistics; hence the competition between siblings is not for the mother's person or the father's money, but for approval of one's achievement on the community rating scale.¹⁶ The third possible course of behavior is for the in-between child to drop back and affiliate with the younger ones. This solution may be accompanied with

¹⁵ Adler, *op. cit.*, p. 322.

¹⁶ Margaret Mead, *And Keep Your Powder Dry*, William Morrow & Company, Inc., New York, 1943, p. 109. See also David Levy, "Sibling Rivalry Studies in Children of Primitive Groups," *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, January, 1939, pp. 205-214; and David Levy, *Studies in Sibling Rivalry*, Research Monograph No. 2, American Orthopsychiatric Association, New York, 1938.

varying attitudes. There may be the attitude of defeatism, a loss of initiative. There may be a sadistic turn, with the in-between child becoming a tease and a bully, taking out on the younger children the venom of his spite toward the oldest one. There may develop, however, an almost tender care for the younger children, the extreme opposite of the privileged despotism of the oldest child.

3. The last child grows up in a more complex family situation than do any of the other children, for there are not only the parents, but also the personalities of the other children, the interplay of their personalities, and their attitudes, singly and collectively, toward him. In a family with several children, and with only the ordinary differences in personal traits, one can appreciate readily how complex such a situation may become. There are distinguishing features in the attitudes of the parents toward the last-born. "Even with wise parents," writes Weill, "there is a tendency to prolong the last babyhood. The parents are older. Their financial position is generally stronger. The cultural opportunities open to this child are consequently greater than those afforded the older children. Discipline may break down with him largely or completely."¹⁷

One of the most important facts about the last-born child is that he is never dethroned. The significance of this is that he grows up in a peculiar and meaningful sense as the baby of the family; and much of what has been said or written about the status, experience, and problems of the last-born is comprehended by this fact. This tendency to regard him as the baby not only is characteristic of the parents, but comes to be shared, especially in many larger families, by the older children. In some large families, the situation is particularly favorable to the "spoiling" of the youngest one. The older children perhaps are at work. Earning money, they remember the privations of their childhood and seek to prevent them for their younger brothers and sisters. The older children fight the battles of the youngest one. They intercede for him with the parents. They make contacts for him. They steer him in advantageous directions. Life for him becomes a relatively easy matter.

It is not uncommon for the oldest child, especially in a larger family, to become a parent substitute for the youngest one. The parents being older by the time the youngest is growing up, they may be less able to be adequate parents; they may be prone to be less

¹⁷ Weill, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

sympathetic with the problems of childhood; they may be blasé, having gone through the experience a number of times. Thus the youngest turns to the oldest child, who is so much nearer the problems involved and yet has, in the eyes of the youngest child, the necessary experience and opportunity.

Of course, something much the reverse may happen. If the last-born arrives a number of years after the birth of the oldest and older ones, there may arise considerable resentment against the newly born member. Especially is this apt to be true if the older children are charged with much of the responsibility of rearing the new one. As this is being written, there comes to light a case from a social agency in Philadelphia. A seventeen-year-old boy, the oldest of four in a Lithuanian family, is given the responsibility for the care of a newborn brother. Among other duties enjoined upon him is the changing and washing of the baby's diapers. This he resents exceedingly. He broods over his predicament. He longs for surcease from his sorrows. At the depth of his degradation there comes an invitation to join a gang of counterfeiters. To him it seems like an answer sent from heaven. Success with the counterfeiters means freedom from his brother's diapers; failure, but a few years in jail at the worst, by which time his youngest brother will have grown out of the stage of his toilet dependencies.

Two possible roads are open most widely for the last-born to take in his adjustments to his family situation. One is to accept the situation and exploit it. Be the baby, and make the most out of it. Utilize the position to the utmost. Why try to develop your own powers? Why try to secure things for yourself? Simply wait, and someone in the family group, mindful of the fact that you are the baby, will secure it for you. The other alternative is again, as for the in-between child, to drive restlessly forward, to catch up and even surpass the others. It is not without significance that "both in the Bible and in fairy-tales, people's knowledge of mankind has generally given to the youngest the greatest gifts, especially the 'magic boots' which enable him to surpass his brothers."¹⁸ This kind of person is sometimes referred to as the "Joseph type," and the story of Joseph (Genesis: 37-50) is particularly revealing in this connection. Joseph, it will be recalled, was the last-born of his father, the son of his old age, beloved above his other children. His brothers, jealous of this, hated him so they could not even speak peacefully to him. Planning originally to kill him, they sold him to

¹⁸ Adler, *op. cit.*, p. 322.

the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver. But in the wake of their success against their brother came a series of spectacular developments to his advantage. Everything came to him, even the wife of Potiphar, and the ultimate triumph of this dreamer over his older, more practical brothers was complete.

THE INDIVIDUALITY OF SIBLING INTERACTIONS

In the preceding pages it was pointed out that the contributions of siblings to each other vary on the basis of certain factors, five of which were selected for discussion. These five were the nature of the child, the nature of the home situation, the age of the siblings, differences in sex, and order of birth. These factors, it will be appreciated, influence not only the relationships between siblings, but also those between parents and siblings. It is possible for the purposes of discussion to consider these factors separately and to point out their possible roles. In the reality of life situations, however, no such isolation prevails. In any one family, all of them operate and affect each other in all kinds of ways—now one reinforces the other; here one counteracts the other; there the two combine to negate, stimulate, or avoid the third. For example, the status and role of the oldest child may be completely negated by the sex factor and the home situation. The oldest child is a daughter. The home is one in which the masculine tradition is strong. The mother wants very much to have a son. The second child is a son. The result of this situation is apparent. The oldest daughter has at best only part of the eldest child's customary prerogatives.

We come then to point out—and the fact cannot be emphasized too much—that the interaction between the siblings in any one family is a distinctly individual one. Our understanding of the role of any one factor is at best only relative, suggestive of the possibilities for which to look. How they operate, with every other factor, in any particular family, must always be regarded as an intriguing field for careful study, and with a driving appreciation that each case will have its own special variants and yield its own special returns in human understanding to students who proceed in the best traditions of the scientific method.

SUMMARY

1. Interaction between siblings constitutes a fundamental aspect of family life. The distinctive features of sibling relationships are their

inclusive character, the extensiveness of the contacts included, and the frankness of the relationships.

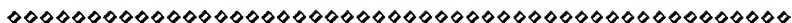
2. Siblings are effective teachers for each other, both through word of mouth and by serving to mirror each other. The family is a miniature school, and a hard school offering many lessons as siblings live constantly with each other.

3. Siblings give emotional satisfactions to each other, often with particular emphasis upon a sense of security which has basic implications for mental hygiene.

4. The problems of the only child—his egocentrism, his sensitiveness, and his emotional isolation—illustrate in reverse the importance of sibling interaction. The only child lacks the things that siblings give each other.

5. What siblings contribute to each other varies considerably. Differential factors are (a) the nature of the children, (b) the nature of the home situation, (c) differences in the ages of the siblings, (d) differences in their sex, and (e) order of birth.

Family Culture and the Child



A third approach to the study of family situations concerns itself with their cultural content. Although family structure and family process are distinct social entities, each with its own significance, from the larger point of view both are but means to an end, and that end is the content which they serve to convey. This content is culture, and it is in many ways the most significant aspect of a family situation. Accordingly, the present chapter is devoted to a consideration of the meaning of family culture, its relation to the larger culture system, the differing versions of this larger system, the cultural role of the family, and the nature of the contemporary problems precipitated for children by these cultural factors and processes.

THE SOCIOLOGICAL EMPHASIS UPON CULTURE AND THE FAMILY

Culture is another of the words which sociologists have come to accept as part of their scientific terminology, investing it with rather precise meaning. In contrast to popular parlance, which uses it as synonymous with good manners, proper etiquette, or refinement of artistic taste, it is defined by sociologists and other social scientists as "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and other capabilities acquired by man as a member of society."¹ Expressed more simply and tersely, culture is the sum total of the ways of doing and thinking, past and present, of a social group.² From the standpoint of the child, culture is the social heritage to which he is born and in which he is reared. This social heritage includes the

¹ E. B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, Brentano's, New York, 7th ed., 1924, p. 1.

² Emory S. Bogardus, *Contemporary Sociology*, University of Southern California Press, Los Angeles, 1931, p. 68.

answers which his group has made and is making to the problems of life.

It is an accepted sociological principle that culture, thus conceived, is one of the chief determinants in the formation of personality. In fact, so great is the relative importance which sociologists attach to the conditioning power of the cultural heritage that personality is continually spoken of as the subjective side of culture. Equivalent in meaning is the other frequently cited dictum of the self as a social looking glass. The foregoing principle was emphasized in Chapter II and is recalled here because of its background importance to the discussion in the present chapter. Stated usually without reference to or qualification for age, the application of this principle to the child would seem to be particularly obvious. In other words, if culture determines personality, certainly it does so with particular force and effectiveness in that period of life when it is accepted and absorbed with little or no hesitation or questioning.

Along with his emphasis upon cultural data and the principle that personality is culturally determined goes the sociologist's concern with the family. The insight into social relations which sociologists have obtained thus far all points unmistakably to the primary importance of the family; courses on the family are among the few given by sociology departments everywhere, and much of the research work done by sociologists centers about the family. In brief, both by what they say and by what they do, sociologists reveal their great emphasis upon and preoccupation with the social role of the family, a fact which again seems most applicable and pertinent in the area of the social development of the child.

Combining these emphases in sociology, one must conclude that the cultural content of family situations has marked importance for personality studies in general and for the social development of the child in particular. If, on the one hand, sociologists have been slow in appreciating this, it is due to facts other than the logical sequence of their thinking; if, on the other hand, students of child behavior have not recognized the primary role of cultural factors, it would seem to be due to their preoccupation with other contributing circumstances.

THE FAMILY CULTURE PATTERN

In making a cultural approach to the study of family situations, it is important to distinguish between family life as part of the culture

system and the family as a medium through which the larger cultural heritage is transmitted to the child. These are two distinct social realities; it is important to identify and remember the difference between them.

The pattern of family culture is our first concern. Speaking generally, this consists of the ways of living and thinking which constitute the family and sex aspects of group life. This is one of the patterns which is part of the culture system of all societies. It includes marriage and courtship procedures, sex mores, husband-wife relationships, status of men and women, guardianship, parent-child relationships, divorce, disposition of the children's earnings, family solidarity, responsibility toward aging parents, attitudes toward unmarried mothers and children born out of wedlock, and various other matters. In short, there exists in each society a series of socially accepted attitudes and forms of behavior centering around the sex, procreative, homemaking, child-rearing and family relationship activities of the group which social scientists today speak of as the family and sex culture pattern.

Selected Family Culture Patterns.

What family patterns are and how they differ from one culture to another can best be shown by presenting several brief descriptions of such patterns as they have been observed in widely different cultural areas.³

1. The first is summarized from the available data on southern Italian family life.⁴ Family life here is strongly knit, and is dominated by the father, in whose name authority is exercised. Control by the father is rigorous and comprehensive. It includes the management of the household, the right of control over the children's occupation, and selection of their marital partner. The children are expected to accept the mates selected for them. Property considerations in marriage still prevail. The family is a closely bound economic unit. Children go to work early, and the wages earned by each member of the family go into a common fund. This fund is controlled by the parent and utilized

³ There is a considerable literature on family culture patterns in various parts of the world. For a summary more extended than the plan of this volume permits, the reader is referred to Joseph K. Folsom, *The Family and Democratic Society*, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, 1943, pp. 1-54, 84-145.

⁴ Irvin L. Child, *Italian or American?* Yale University Press, New Haven, 1943; Celena A. Baxter, "Sicilian Family Life," *The Family*, May, 1933, pp. 82-88; Jerre Mangione, *Mount Allegro*, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1942; Caroline Ware, *Greenwich Village*, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1935.

for the needs of the family members. In return for their cooperation in this, the children are given an allowance, are maintained when unemployed, and are given aid when they are married. The strong unity of the southern Italian family shows itself in other ways. Respect for parents and relatives is much emphasized. Fear of the father and love of the mother are twin principles in family life. Overt acts of hostility against one member become the concern of the entire group. Violent quarrels may occur within the family but are not to be talked about to persons outside the family group.

Marriage is consummated at an early age. Girls particularly have a short childhood. The emphasis in their early training is upon becoming good wives and mothers. Girls are taught to feed and bathe and clothe babies, make beds, and do the family washing. The younger girls in lower-class families are generally placed in domestic service. A girl's place is understood to be in the home, and consideration for a girl in the family takes the form of selecting a good husband and providing her with a fine wardrobe and a well-filled hope chest. The male, by way of contrast, must play a superior role, and therefore is given special educational opportunities in his youth.

The distinction between men and women is also evident in their recreational life, for each sex remains separate. Italian men engage in drinking, playing games, arguing, and discussing public affairs. Games with small stakes are popular; clubs and societies are relatively prevalent. By contrast, women are not expected to drink much or to play games, their social life being confined to visits with neighbors or socializing at the neighborhood store. There is some seclusion of women from public activities. A good wife is one who bears many children and works harder than her husband, leaving to him the management of family affairs and its leadership in communal relations.

There is little discussion of sex within the family, yet children are present constantly when parents speak of it and the small homes make inevitable some observation of parental sex behavior. There is a fairly frank acceptance of a double standard of sex behavior, but a young man does not make sexual advances to unmarried girls whom he respects. There is a high value upon a girl's virginity until her marriage. Daughters particularly are jealously guarded by their fathers. In Sicily, the sex mores are enforced by fear of the vendetta. Chaperonage still flourishes, especially in the upper classes. Infidelity of the wife is considered extremely seriously; male jealousy and possessiveness are insti-

tutionalized. Rates of illegitimacy are relatively low, but natural children are the responsibility of the father and must be given the same treatment as though born in wedlock. Marriage and the family are under the special control of the church which, for most southern Italians, means the Roman Catholic Church. Although Roman Catholic by profession, there is much criticism of the church and antagonism toward the clergy. This is particularly true of the men, who incline to think of the church as intended chiefly for the women, children, and aged.

2. The family pattern of Sweden may be described briefly by way of contrast. Here is a country with a long history of continuous peace, a homogeneous population with no problems of minority groups, a long tradition of public education and democratic processes, and well-established patterns of normality and lawfulness.

Relatively speaking, there is equality between the sexes in Sweden. "During the rapid industrialization of Sweden the status of Swedish women has been revolutionized. Their economic standard, their legal status, their civil rights, their daily work environment, and their general attitude to life are all closer to a complete equality with those of men than in most other countries."⁵ The marriage rate in Sweden is lower than in most countries. This is due in part to the age structure of the population, in part to the industrial structure which separates men-employing industries from those which employ women, and in part to a certain prudence in founding a family which is so widespread as to make it a definite social characteristic. Long engagements are common; the average age at marriage is high, as is also the percentage of unmarried persons. Virtually half the adult population of Sweden is unwed. Before the time of a mobile, industrially employed population, there was widespread acceptance of the pattern of premarital sex relationships, and a relative tolerance of them continues down to the present day. The double standard of sex conduct, more prevalent during the nineteenth century, has been giving way rapidly to the acceptance of the same standard for both sexes. This obviously is a phase of the equality of the sexes, previously mentioned. The rate of illegitimacy is high in Sweden. During the decade 1921-1930, almost one child in every six was born out of wedlock. Sweden is also noted for its advanced legislation on the care and status of children thus born.

⁵ Alva Myrdal, "Swedish Women in Industry and at Home," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, May, 1938, p. 216.

There is secular rather than church control of marriage and divorce. Divorce is approved in preference to the toleration of extramarital relationships. In fact, the theory of divorce is more liberal in Sweden than in the United States, although recourse to it is less frequent. Divorce by mutual consent, and without specific cause, is obtainable. Divorce risks have increased approximately tenfold during the lifetime of recent generations. During the years 1861–1870, an average of 4.9 marriages were thus dissolved, as against 1000 new marriages; but during 1931–1935, the corresponding figure was 56.⁶

There is a great deal of emphasis upon scientific infant and child care. Some of this is confined to the home, particularly during the pre-school years. Swedish mothers take charge of their children during this period more than do American mothers. Beyond these years, the child-caring and -training functions of the family have been transferred to a great extent to communal institutions. There is a long tradition in Sweden of public services of this kind, and the feeling of group responsibility for child welfare is very strong.

3. A third example of a family culture pattern representative of still another section of Europe in the years before the Second World War, is the one found in the Soviet Union. Drawing heavily upon the summary presented by Fairchild, we may note the following main features:⁷ (a) Equality of husband and wife is emphasized. Women have equal status with men in all “spheres of economic, state, cultural, social and political life.”⁸ (b) There is separation of property owned by husband and wife respectively. Mutual responsibility of each for the support of the other and of the children is accepted. (c) Marriage and divorce depended on the simple process of registration. Beyond social control by way of protecting the mother and child, the relation between the sexes was a matter of private concern only. There was considerable freedom in sex relations. Divorce was frequent, with a considerable changing of marriage partners. Toward the end of the period under consideration, an increasing stability of the family came to prevail, and there was a rise in divorce requirements.⁹ (d) Freedom of abortion prevailed from 1930 to 1936, when it was restricted to cases in which the

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 221.

⁷ Mildred Fairchild, “The Family in the Soviet Union,” *Sociological Review*, October, 1937, pp. 619–629. See also Rose Maurer, “Recent Trends in the Soviet Family,” *ibid.*, June, 1944, pp. 242–249.

⁸ Fairchild, *op. cit.*, p. 624.

⁹ Sweeping changes in divorce legislation were decreed as of July 9, 1944.

mother's health was threatened by pregnancy or when the parent had a serious disease which could be transmitted. (e) The primary purpose of marriage regulation was the obligation for the care of children. By the code of 1926 the support of children was obligatory and strictly enforced, in accordance with ability to pay. (f) Responsibility for the maintenance of children included those born out of wedlock, no distinction between legitimate and illegitimate children being recognized. (g) The state accepted a large measure of responsibility for the care and education of children. A comprehensive network of agencies to deal with the problems of pregnancy, childbirth, and infant care developed. Public education began at the age of four, and continued, according to the child's ability, through a university. (h) Russian parents carried the primary responsibility for the nurture and upbringing of their children. The various auxiliary and supplementary child-caring services which developed were based on the idea that the essential function of women in the family went beyond those of cooking, washing the clothes, and bathing the children. (i) Complete freedom of dissemination of contraceptive knowledge and material guaranteed the child's right to be wanted. (j) The general picture seems to have been one of personal freedom in family and sex relations, consonant with the stability of reproduction and child care, as the Russians interpreted it.

The Primary Importance of the Family Culture.

No part of the entire culture system seems quite so important for the child as the family culture pattern. It is peculiarly the child-centered aspect of the culture; in fact, the child is what gives meaning to the pattern as a whole. The family culture consists of all the stages involved in the child's birth and rearing; it includes virtually every feature of the child's life for a number of years. Other aspects of it can be viewed from the child's standpoint with a certain objectivity: the child is introduced to those parts of the culture. But he lives the family culture, and thus one must regard it as the most subjective, the most deeply embedded part of the cultural heritage: the one which carries over longest in the life span. With these general thoughts in mind, the reader is asked to consider again the three family patterns which have just been presented. They are representative of three cultural systems in an old, relatively developed, and socially mature continent. The differences are striking. The family life of each is distinctive, and different from the other. They differ in their minutiae,

in combination, in values, in point of view; and these differences are the essence of what the children in these respective cultures absorb with such intimate completeness as to seem the nature of human nature.

THE FAMILY AND THE LARGER CULTURE SYSTEM

The family culture is, of course, only a part of the larger culture of society. This larger culture is made up of a number of patterns involving the fundamental aspects of the communal life. Recent students of culture have identified thirteen patterns as generally present in the cultural system or configuration of a society. They are as follows:

1. Patterns of communication: gestures and language.
2. Methods and objects for providing for man's physical welfare.
 - a. Food getting.
 - b. Personal care.
 - c. Shelter.
 - d. Tools, instruments, and machines.
3. Means or techniques of travel and transportation of goods and services.
4. Exchange of goods and services: barter, trade, commerce, occupation.
5. Forms of property: real and personal.
6. The sex and family patterns.
 - a. Marriage and divorce.
 - b. Forms of kinship relation.
 - c. Guardianship.
 - d. Inheritance.
7. Societal controls and institutions of government.
 - a. Mores.
 - b. Public opinion.
 - c. Organized state: laws and political officers.
 - d. War: institutional form of conflict of tribes, societies, or states.
8. Artistic expression: architecture, painting, sculpture, music, literature, dancing.
9. Recreational and leisure-time interests and activities.
10. Religious and magical ideas and practices.
11. Science (in civilization chiefly).
12. Mythology and philosophy.
13. Cultural structuring of basic interactional processes, such as competition, conflict, cooperation, differentiation, stratification, accommodation, and assimilation.¹⁰

The Family and the Transmission of Culture.

A second cultural role of the family is its service as an agent in the transmission of this culture system or configuration to the child. This

¹⁰ Kimball Young, *Sociology—A Study of Society and Culture*, American Book Company, New York, 1942, p. 39.

is one of the fundamental roles of the family in relation to the child. It is through the family that the child gets his first introduction to the culture of his era and area. And for a number of years the family remains the chief agency through which he has contacts with the cultural milieu.

VARYING VERSIONS OF THE CULTURE CONFIGURATION

The Ethos, or National Culture.

Children are born customarily into a particular system or configuration of culture patterns, usually national in scope, and of a definite historical epoch. The distinguishing culture system of a particular society was called the *ethos* by the ancient Greeks; and William Graham Sumner, pioneer American sociologist, utilized the term to apply to the totality of characteristic traits by which a society is individualized and differentiated from other societies.¹¹ It is in the *ethos*, then, that the United States differs fundamentally from Nazi Germany, modern Persia, ancient Judea, or the interior of China in 2000 B.C.

A few comparisons will reveal how comprehensive these differences are in our contemporary world. Consider, for example, the United States and India in recent decades. The differences in the material culture of the two countries are well known and require no comment here. Less emphasized are the differences in their non-material culture, which really are the characteristic features of the two countries. As suggested by Young, they are as follows.¹² Our American culture is dominated by (1) belief in individual material success and national progress; (2) belief in universal literacy and education as the means of solving social and personal problems; (3) acceptance of the idea that there is advantage and virtue in rapid movement through space; (4) faith in the virtue of constant change in all, or most, aspects of life; (5) confidence in man's ability to control and direct his destiny, in both a personal and a social sense. In India, by way of contrast, there is less belief in progress, or none, in our sense of the word; mere bigness has no special merit; there is no virtue in rapid movement; calm deliberation is the height of desirability; and the desire for forgetfulness

¹¹ William G. Sumner, *Folkways*, Ginn & Company, Boston, 1911, pp. 37-38.

¹² Young, *op. cit.*, pp. 42-43.

of the self and of the wish to be somebody is the ultimate good, rather than material success.¹⁸

To this ethos, or national cultural pattern, the child is introduced by his family. This introduction is in part formal, but much more it is incidental and imperceptible. The ethos surrounds the child at every turn; he learns it because he knows no other. It is like the air he breathes or the landscape he sees. To him it is but a natural part of the scheme of things. And all the time, as he learns the culture he absorbs the family attitude toward it. He shares this attitude with his parents, and because of his emotional relationship to them his attitude toward the culture becomes emotionally tinged. Thus originate those feelings toward one's country, and about other countries whose cultural pattern is different, with which we have been so much concerned in recent years. One recalls here Sumner's remark that the ethos furnishes the point of view from which one group criticizes the ways of another group.

The identification of the family version of this natural culture pattern is highly important in any country; it is peculiarly so in the United States because of the heterogeneity of our population. In 1930, one-third of the population of the continental United States consisted of persons who were either foreign-born or native-born of foreign parents. Included in these two elements were twenty-nine nationality groups consisting of more than 100,000 individuals, sixteen of more than 500,000, and eleven of more than a million. In many cases, considerable numbers of people in one nationality group have lived together in a relatively compact manner so as to maintain various features of their alien culture, despite many years of American residence. In studying family situations from the point of view of cultural content, it becomes important to ask questions such as those which follow. Is the family version of the ethos of this American-reared child an American version, an American-Sicilian one, or an American-Bulgarian one? Do the father and mother represent the same national culture? Are the version held by the immediate family and that of the larger kinship group family the same? Here, concretely speaking, is a young man, born and reared on the lower East Side of New York, son of an Italian father and an Irish mother. What is his national culture pattern as transmitted by his family?

¹⁸ K. Shridharani, *My India, My America*, Duell, Sloan & Pearce, Inc., New York, 1941.

The Regional Culture.

Recently, social scientists have broken down the nation into regions. The region is a unit part of the larger society, identified first in geographical terms, subsequently on the basis of trade and other economic considerations, and now increasingly on cultural bases. Much of the research work on the region today is based on identifying selected traits which lend themselves to statistical treatment. Howard Odum has made a noteworthy contribution by dividing the states of the nation into six groups on the basis of outstanding similarities of culture.¹⁴ The Division of Social Research of the Works Progress Administration has an interesting report, "Cultural Regions Within the Rural-Farm Population." It identifies twenty-nine cultural areas and 210 subregions within these areas.

These cultural areas are not mere academic distinctions. Under one name or another, they have long been recognized in popular parlance as well as in more intellectual discussions. The Southerner differs from the Maine Yankee, and the Iowan in Hollywood is unlike both; the Prussian and the Bavarian have never "spoken the same language"; the northern Italian is different from the Sicilian in many respects in his ways, his speech, and his ideas. The region has its distinct cultural features. It carries "certain dominant motifs which serve as selective norms and as centers with reference to which conduct is directed. . . . It is this complex regional culture which produces the personality patterns of its inhabitants through the stimuli which it radiates, the preferences and choices which it offers, and the distinctive placement of persons or groups of persons, which constitutes its structure."¹⁵ The region, in other words, is a distinctive social system that supplies a plan for personality patterning. It is this regional or sectional variant of the national cultural pattern that is imposed on the child through the family.

A considerable number of studies of family culture patterns in particular regional areas in the United States have been made.¹⁶

¹⁴ Howard Odum, *Southern Regions of the United States*, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1936; H. W. Odum and H. E. Moore, *American Regionalism*, Henry Holt & Company, Inc., New York, 1938; National Resources Committee, *Regional Factors in National Planning and Development*, Government Printing Office, Washington, 1935.

¹⁵ J. O. Hertzler, "Some Notes on the Social Psychology of Regionalism," *Social Forces*, March, 1940, pp. 331-332.

¹⁶ Nels Anderson, "The Mormon Family," *American Sociological Review*, Oc-

These show significant variations within the same nation. When to these studies of family culture are added the available analyses of the larger regional culture, the scope of the cultural differences between regions within the United States becomes apparent.¹⁷ Moreover, the reader will remember that ours is a nation which throughout its history has been free of barriers in the interchange of populations between its respective regions, and that the foregoing cultural variations were identified at a time in its history when there prevailed the utmost facility in the mobility of population. Cultural variations on a regional basis are not only extensive but highly persistent.

The large-scale movement of people from one region to another within the United States has been studied from the standpoint of population changes, the social effects of mobility, its relation to employment, its effect upon school facilities, and various other aspects. For this reason it is striking to notice how little appreciation has been given to its meaning for child behavior, although it is obvious that its significance in this respect must be marked. The child is inducted into the regional culture. This regional variant is in many respects more intimately meaningful to him than the national culture. When the family moves from one region to another, the transition for the child may be very difficult. Consider, for example, the child of North Carolina piedmont parentage who is thrust overnight, as it were, into the school and social life of a second-generation Irish or Portuguese section in New England. Such a child appreciates, if parents and child behavior students do not, the reality of differences in the regional culture.

The Class Culture.

The population of any national and regional society is divided in turn into class and other interest groups, and the more these groupings be-

tober, 1937, pp. 601-608; C. C. Zimmerman and M. E. Frampton, *Family and Society*, D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., New York, 1935; Howard W. Beers, "The Farm Family in Central New York State," *American Sociological Review*, October, 1937, pp. 591-600; Horace Miner, "The French-Canadian Family Cycle," *ibid.*, October, 1938, pp. 700-708; D. Sanderson and Robert Foster, "A Sociological Case Study of Farm Families," *The Family*, June, 1930, pp. 107-114.

¹⁷ Consult, for example, the studies of the culture of contemporary rural communities made under the direction of the United States Department of Agriculture and published in its Rural Life Study Series. For a glimpse of regional non-material culture, see John Walker McCain, Jr., "Some Small-Town Folk Beliefs of the Carolina Piedmont," *Social Forces*, March, 1934, pp. 418-420.

come distinct and fixed, the more prescribed and predictable are the patterns of attitudes and behaviors associated with them. These class culture patterns have become so important in the social development of the contemporary American child that a separate chapter is devoted later in this volume to their analysis. The one point to be emphasized here is that the family transmits to the child the culture pattern of its own class, together with the class attitudes toward other classes. The family influence upon the child is particularly significant in its rating of social classes, placing its own class in the scale and determining its attitudes toward other classes. Here one finds marked emotions, for these matters of class distinctions go far below the surface. Prejudice and appreciation, antagonism and cooperation, pride and a rankling sense of injustice—these develop as by-products of the transmission of the class culture. Class bias has its roots in the family setting of the child, and it has taken form before the family turns him over to other culture-transmitting agencies.

In other words, the child gets from the family pattern a way of living, based on the fact that he is born in a certain class in a given region in a particular nation. He learns the life of Boston rather than of Burma; of the flat or the farm; of the slum or the suburb; of the Sicilian concrete mixer or the Fifth Avenue surgeon. In short, the child gets from the family his class cultural orientation. Thus as a functioning element in the cultural content of any given family situation, there must be considered the family version of the class culture which has been transmitted to the child.

The Family Version.

The culture to which the child is born is too vast, too comprehensive, too diverse, to be transmitted in its entirety, either by the family or by other agencies subsequently assisting it. This is particularly true of ideas, beliefs, and values in the culture. From the beginning of the child's induction into the culture, the family does more than merely transmit the culture. To speak more precisely, the family customarily performs three additional or supplementary functions: (1) it selects from the existing surroundings what is transmitted; (2) it interprets to the child what is transmitted; and (3) it evaluates what it transmits. In other words, the child sees the cultural heritage through the eyes of his family; he learns of it through the symbols which the family uses; and he shares the family's feelings toward it.

There are a number of factors which in turn determine this selective and evaluating process. Obviously, the family is limited in these respects to the culture which it has come to know; in part, it depends on what in the culture it has access to; third is the effect of its experience with different aspects of the culture; and, finally, there is the influence of the family's hopes. Each family is prone to see its children as its future, so that domestic hopes and ideals are imposed upon the children, often with more emotional accompaniment than are the realities of the culture. In other words, every family transmits the cultural heritage in its own way. More than that, it transmits its own version, compounded out of what it can see of the culture, how it sees it, and how it wants to see it.

The result of this selective and evaluating process on the part of the family is the formation of the child's sense of values, in regard to both personal pursuits and social behavior. The culture to which the child is born has its folkways, its mores, and its scale of rewards for differing schematizations of living. But it is within the bosom of the family that judgments are formed, conflicts of culture are resolved, choices are made or at least influenced. Life is varied and complex, infinitely full of possibilities. Personality development is a constant series of choices. These choices represent the person's values, and modern scholarship concludes that these values are in large part the result of family conditioning.

Striking statistical confirmation of the relative importance of the family in this respect is to be found in a study by Hartshorne and May of the sources from which children derive their ethical concepts. The methodology pursued in this study was to note the degree of correspondence between the moral judgments of the child and those of other persons with whom he was closely associated. The correlation between the children's ideas of right and wrong and the scores of their associates revealed the following results:

Child and parents545
Child and friends353
Child and club leaders137
Child and day-school teachers028
Child and Sunday-school teachers002

A perfect correlation would be represented by 1000; so in interpreting the above figures, whatever other questions may be raised, it is clear

that the most significant correspondence exists between the judgments of the children and those of the parents. The study also found that the judgments of the children were more closely allied to those of the mother than of the father.¹⁸

So fundamental is the role of the cultural values transmitted by the family and operating in any given family situation that the fullest consideration must be given to their identification and operation. Unfortunately, sociologists have shown a reluctance to deal with values, apparently on the ground that their intangible and subjective nature makes their objective study impossible. Being relative newcomers to the study of behavior problems, sociologists seem to have leaned over backward in their desire to confine themselves to data and methods similar to those of the older and more established natural sciences. It is an implication of the outline of study proposed in this chapter that culture values can be studied objectively.

THE FAMILY AND THE CHILD'S PLACE IN THE CULTURE

As the child is being introduced to his cultural heritage, there arise other questions of a more personal nature. Who am I? What am I? What is my own particular relation to this cultural situation in which I find myself? What is my peculiar place in it? What is my status?

These questions arise early, and are insistent. Parents may sense them before children develop to the point of formulating them. Social workers recognize the craving of adopted and foster children to learn about their own parents—who they were, what sort of people they were—regardless of how they were treated by them. The press is replete with stories of grown persons seeking knowledge of parents they never knew. The study of genealogy is a very human and understandable quest.

Sociologists and psychiatrists have made much of the concept of status. They define it to mean position in society, the standing accorded the individual by his fellows. Status, in other words, is one's place on a prestige scale. Linton defines it in terms of polar positions in the patterns of reciprocal behavior between individuals and groups.¹⁹ Perhaps we might summarize by saying that status involves one's per-

¹⁸ H. Hartshorne and M. A. May, "Testing the Knowledge of Right and Wrong," *Religious Education*, October, 1926, pp. 539-554.

¹⁹ Ralph Linton, *The Study of Man*, D. Appleton-Century Company, Inc., New York, 1936, chap. 8.

sonal orientation in his cultural setting. A more extended discussion of the subject of status will be found in subsequent chapters.

One of the most important things which the family does for the child is to give him status. Rather, one should speak of the statuses which he gets from the family. There is, first of all, his status in the family of procreation. With the coming of another child, this status is modified, often quite materially so. Again, the child has his status in the family of orientation, if that differs from the family of procreation. In these statuses in the immediate family, sex, age, and age relationship are the determining factors.

It is with reference to the child's status in the large society that the family serves a most important function. In this connection both the immediate and the kinship group types may be of great importance in giving the child his status in the world of his fellows. The family does this by means of two things: it gives him a name and a social position. Without a name, the child is only an undifferentiated human organic unit. When he is named he becomes "somebody." Then, by virtue of his family, he obtains a place in the social group. He is now what sociologists call a "person," i.e., an individual with status.²⁰

What has just been said suggests the tremendous role of the family name and tradition in the development of a child. Nimkoff contrasts in this connection the histories of several well-known American families. As an example on the positive side is the famous Adams family, which for two centuries has been distinguished for its record of public service. John Adams (1735-1826) was the second President of the United States. His cousin, Samuel Adams, was an outstanding leader in the American Revolution. His son, John Quincy Adams, was our sixth President. His son, Charles Francis Adams, was U. S. Minister to England. The latter's son, Henry Adams, became a distinguished historian; and his son, Charles Francis Adams, was Secretary of the Navy in the administration of President Hoover. As illustrations on the negative side may be cited the Juke and Kallikak families, so well known to students of American social problems. It requires but little imagination to appreciate the tremendous handicap imposed by these family names upon successive generations.²¹

²⁰ Robert Park and Ernest W. Burgess, *An Introduction to the Science of Society*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1925, p. 35.

²¹ Meyer F. Nimkoff, *The Family*, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1934, pp. 68 ff.

The family name is particularly important in the United States, with its many large population groups of recent foreign extraction. These family names quickly identify the child as a member of a particular group, and since these groups are apt to have a distinctive status, the child is assigned that status. What may result from this is described by Schettler. "Persons of minority nationality groups learn through experience that certain names always awaken certain prejudices. These persons realize that it is their names that constitute the common enemy for them as well as for members of the majority group. Evaluation of themselves stops with the judgment placed upon their names. Without consideration, much of their personality has been thereby discarded. These persons act upon the lesson learned, and they decide that a new or false name is an effective mask for disguising themselves. They change their names. Taraskevicia is translated as Rasko, Strakovsky is recast as Stark, Berkovitz evolves as Burke, Trofinov turns up as Travis, and Keidansky is shortened to Kay."²²

This factor of status is related closely to two other concepts much emphasized in the recent literature of social psychology and psychiatry. One of these is the matter of security. We all seek security throughout life. Very early in life the child senses security or insecurity as a member of the family group. He feels that he was wanted or not wanted; that he was a boy when his mother wanted a boy, or the reverse; that he came too soon, or when he was wanted. Later on, he seeks security through membership in secondary groups, through achievement of one sort or another. Many a personality pattern of extreme aggressiveness or incessant restlessness or an insatiable drive for power results from deep-seated insecurity formed during this period. Still later, people seek security in marriage. The pattern of many marriages is not one of romance, but of a drive for the security which the chosen mate may give. Part of the quest for security is for physical and economic safeguards against the threats of an external, foreboding world; but much of it is psychosocial—a wanting to belong.

Status has a great deal to do with conduct through its effect upon one's conception of oneself. The role of the conception of oneself has been grasped by many students of human nature. William James used to remark that a man had as many selves as there were persons who

²² Clarence Schettler, "Does Your Name Identify You?" *Social Forces*, December, 1942, p. 172.

recognized him and carried an image of him in their minds. The poet Masfield writes:

And there were three men went down the road,
As down the road went he.
The man they saw, the man he was,
And the man he wanted to be.

Status is a factor in the determination of a person's conception of the self, and this conception in turn is a determinant in his behavior. This, then, is another element in the cultural content of a family situation which should be considered.

SOCIAL CHANGE AND THE FAMILY'S TRANSMISSION OF CULTURE

The culture-transmitting role of the family has been growing in importance in recent times and in a number of ways. First, the culture to be transmitted has been accumulating rapidly. Cultural expansion in the past century and a half has been phenomenal, and the rate of growth shows no signs of abatement. Rather, all the evidence points to its acceleration, particularly the part which is the result of modern science. During the past century or more, there has developed a pattern of science, invention, and discovery which has become thoroughly embedded in our cultural configuration and which has resulted both in very rapid cultural change and in its cumulation in precise and available form. All of this means not only that there is much more for the family to transmit to the child, but also that the task of selecting and interpreting and evaluating the culture has grown correspondingly.

This expanding task of the family in turn necessitates a longer period of time, so that with the accumulation of culture there needs to be a corresponding lengthening of what has been spoken of traditionally as the period of infancy. Actually, what is meant is the period of preparation for life during which the child remains under the supervision of the family. It is obvious, too, that the lengthening of this period is primarily a social fact, rather than a biological one as has been assumed so often. The lengthening of this period of the child's dependence upon the family is a change of outstanding significance, both in the history of the family and in the social development of the child. This will be discussed more adequately in a later chapter; we seek here only to identify it as an accessory to the expansion of modern culture and the tasks of the contemporary family.

This longer period and the more extensive culture markedly change the culture-transmitting role of the family. Time was when the culture was simple and the time available for its transmission was short. What the family did was largely to impose this culture upon the child. Today, the family increasingly becomes the manager or administrator of the child's induction into the culture. A part, and a highly important part, of its function remains what it has always been, but in addition there are increasingly the tasks of selecting parts of the culture to be emphasized, establishing necessary and advantageous contacts with specialized cultural agencies, detouring around some aspects of the culture, depreciating others—in short, manipulating and assessing the expanding process of inducting the child into an accumulating culture.

Our rapidly changing and accumulating culture places other responsibilities upon the family. Several of these will be identified.

1. The family must play its role in preparing the child for change. In times past, the time span of change, especially for important changes, was longer as a rule than a generation or even a single human life. As a result, man was trained to adapt himself to fixed conditions. This meant emphasis upon the acceptance of the family culture. Today, this time span is very short. Important changes, even epoch-making changes, are frequent; a number occur within the period when the individual is being reared. What this means is that part of the culture-transmitting role of the family is to prepare the child for change, i.e., for novelty of circumstance. If the family is too backward and resistant to change and transmits this attitude to the child, he may grow up to live in a world of unreality. There are such families, and their children often pay the price of continuing maladjustment.

2. On the other hand, not all changes are important or desirable. The death rate of changes is high. Their life span is short. A certain resistance to them is both essential and wholesome. The family, in other words, needs to play a stabilizing role in a rapidly changing culture. Groves has written understandingly of this particular function of the family. "Human nature," he says, "by its use of the family has organized its best defense against the risk of having all its values placed outside itself. This, of course, does not mean that it is possible for the family to cut itself away from its surroundings, or that it can safely ignore changing conditions. It does, however, indicate that adjustment is a two-way process, and that the family by its guardianship of profound human motivation saves itself from merely registering in

favorable fashion the inflow of physical and social circumstances."²³

3. In a rapidly changing world, the family must give the child a sense of stability and security. There are other institutions and agencies which tend to play a stabilizing role, but they do not afford the comprehensiveness and the intimacy of the family relationship. Change, confusion, and uncertainty have their psychic aspects and implications, and the insurance and insulation against them need to be in kind. The family, it will be recalled, has always served as a refuge and an insurance. In times past, it has been the physical and economic side of this that has been emphasized, first because those were the chief hazards confronting its members, and second because no other agency afforded adequate protection against them. Today, both of these circumstances have changed; it is against the hazards of the spirit that the family offers its chief protection. A child's home still is his castle, even if the light within it has become more important than the moat and wall without. Thus conceived, the family is today more than ever before "the final refuge for those who can find little sense of security elsewhere. This is why the instability of the family becomes so greatly significant. It is not that it is more vulnerable than other social institutions, for on the contrary it is more resistant, but rather that its getting into difficulty demonstrates how serious and widespread general social instability has become."²⁴

SUMMARY

1. A third approach to the study of family situations concerns itself with their cultural content. This, in many ways, is the most significant aspect of family situations; it is the aspect which contemporary sociologists emphasize.

2. The pattern of family life is part of the larger culture system of society. These family patterns differ markedly from one group to another, as studies of selected patterns clearly reveal. From birth, the child is inducted into his particular family culture.

3. Another cultural role of the family is to serve as agent in the transmission of the larger culture systems to the child. For a number of years, the family remains the chief agency through which the child has his contacts with the cultural milieu.

²³ Ernest R. Groves, *The Family and Its Social Functions*, J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia, 1940, p. 448.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 454.

What the Child Gives the Parents



The joys of parents are secret, and so are their griefs and fears. They cannot utter the one, nor will they utter the other. Children sweeten labours, but they make misfortunes more bitter. They increase the cares of life, but they mitigate the remembrance of death. The perpetuity by generation is common to beasts; but memory, merit and noble works are proper to men. . . .

He that hath wife and children hath given hostages to fortune, for they are impediments to great enterprises, either of virtue or mischief. Certainly, the best works, and of greatest merit for the public, have proceeded from the unmarried or childless men, which, both in affection and means, have married and endowed the public. Yet it were great reason that those that have children should have the greatest care of future times; unto which they know they must transmit their dearest pledges.¹

Relative Neglect of This Approach to the Study of the Family.

Students of family-child relationships, being adults usually and parents in some cases, emphasize mostly how parents are responsible for the development of children, how they condition child reactions, how they are the agents which transmit to children the prevailing culture. Relatively little attention is given to a consideration of what the child gives the family and to his role in family development. What makes this omission all the more striking is that common observation reveals constantly the most amazing and obvious changes in the lives and attitudes of a married couple after the arrival of a child.

It is an intriguing exercise for the imagination to speculate on what the literature on the family and child development would be like if it could be written by very young children. When children are encouraged to discuss situations instead of being merely subjected to

¹ Francis Bacon, *Essays*, E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., New York, pp. 60, 63.

them, one is amazed at how differently the same situation can look to two generations, this in spite of children's obvious difficulty in analyzing situations and verbalizing their ideas. Failure to appreciate the contributions of the child to the development of family life is an excellent illustration of man's egocentric approach to human problems of all sorts, and his relative inability to regard himself objectively and in proper perspective. It suggests the question, occasionally and pertinently raised, as to whether adults can ever understand children. "Most of us are adultcentrics: we cannot even for a moment step outside the sphere of adult interests and concerns or set aside the grown-up way of thinking."² In fact, it raises the question how much scientists studying the child really want to understand child behavior, and to what extent their "scientific" conclusions are verbal projections growing out of their own emotional needs. This point is somewhat different from but is related to the conclusions of Dorothy Thomas, namely, that any observation or series of observations is likely to be a distortion of reality in directions predetermined by the personality make-up of the investigator.³

Some Preliminary Observations.

What a child contributes to the family is, of course, a highly individual matter. Many facts about the child and the family have their importance in this connection. Most of these can be grouped, however, under three main headings.

1. The child's characteristics are of obvious importance, varying in degree with the family reaction to them. There is, for example, the sex of the child. Is it the sex which was wanted by the family, and how strong and united was the preference? What are the physical features and traits of the child? Is he considered to be attractive or not? Which of the parents or grandparents does he resemble, and what are the family conceptions of the person resembled? Is the child normal or not? Is he alert, phlegmatic, coy, mischievous, or stupid? At what achievement level does he function? Is the child the kind that parents are proud of, and for what reasons? What are his particular capacities or limitations? In other words, what kind of child is it that has joined

² George Lawton, "Can Adults Ever Really Understand Children?" *Childhood Education*, April, 1940, p. 341.

³ Dorothy S. Thomas, Alice M. Loomis, and Ruth E. Arrington, *Observational Studies of Social Behavior*, Institute of Human Relations, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1933, vol. i, p. 244.

the family group, measured by the particular criteria which that family group value or customarily employ?

2. The attitudes of the parents, both toward parenthood and toward children, will also be significant. These have been discussed in Chapter IV, and it is suggested that the reader review those pages, in the light of their bearing upon the specific theme of this chapter.

Involved in the attitudinal pattern of the parents, with particular reference to any one child, is the time or stage in their life when the child arrives. Did he come too early in their lives? Obviously, parenthood means something quite different to a sixteen-year-old boy and girl, all other things being equal, than to a couple of twenty-eight or forty. Even more important than age in years is degree of emotional maturity. How well are parents prepared emotionally for parenthood and its responsibilities? There are parents but little older emotionally than the children they are rearing, for emotional development does not always conform to chronological age. Complementary to emotional readiness is educational and economic preparation for parenthood. Again, there is the arrival of the first child in relation to the time of marriage. Did the child arrive too soon to accord to the mores of the group? Did he come too early, measured by the wishes and convenience of the parents? Finally, there is the relation of each additional child to the number and birth dates of the children already born. What a child brings to a family depends then, in large measure, on what the family will permit him to bring, on how the parents accept parenthood, and on how they assess or define each new experience of parenthood.

3. Basic to the attitudes of individual parents is the culture of the society to which the parents belong. The advent of a child takes its meaning in part in terms of the larger cultural determinants. There is, for example, the Hebrew conception of parenthood as a form of life fulfillment. There is the Roman Catholic emphasis upon parenthood as the essential purpose of marriage. In certain social classes, children are valued because they mean family continuity; they serve as agents for the perpetuation of family fortunes and prestige. To the creator of a successful business enterprise, children, and particularly sons, embody the founder's hope for its continuance and family control. In many national groups, children are a symbol of the parents' patriotism—the parental contribution to the national reservoir.

This is perhaps the place to refer to the question of a maternal instinct. Is love of one's own child instinctive? Is it part of the mental

orientation of many persons to think so. Particularly has it been customary during the past to refer to the existence of such an instinct, the idea implied being that there is a deeply embedded something, hereditary in character and universal in existence, which leads women to have a tenderly solicitous regard for their offspring. There is much, on the basis of a common-sense approach to life processes, to justify such a conclusion, but the tendency of many modern scholars is to be rather skeptical about it. It is their custom to point out the widespread existence of infanticide among many primitive folk, as well as among more advanced groups; and it is their argument that whatever the role of hereditary factors may be, parental interest in children is to a large extent acquired after the birth of the child.

The Dynamic Character of the Child's Contribution.

One further preliminary observation is in order. The child's contribution to the family is a constantly changing one. Parent-child relationships, on both the interactive and cultural bases, represent a continuing, developmental process. Family life is an experience which is going on constantly, in which adults, as well as children, are undergoing personality development. It is important to emphasize this because the widespread acceptance of the idea that the child's personality is relatively determined in the first few years of life has carried with it the implication that parent-child relationships become fixed during that same period. This, of necessity and fortunately, is not true. Obviously, the relationship between the parents is changing constantly. As Plant put it, "Marriage may itself be described as a childhood experience in which with the aid of certain sophistications one can manage rather comfortably to show the development of family life for the adult as quite as changing and adapting an affair as it is for the child."⁴ Similarly, parents change their attitudes toward their children. Many a parent, extremely resentful of a child in the beginning of married life, reacts later on as far and as vehemently in the opposite direction. A twenty-one-year-old bride, thoroughly frightened and bitter because of her pregnancy, seeks vainly for someone to commit an abortion on her. Ten years later, with three children, she pleads with her childless friends to "settle down and live." Unmarried parents who in the first throes of their desperation will do anything to be relieved of

⁴James S. Plant, "Mental Hygiene Aspects of the Family," a pamphlet reprinted from the April, May, June, 1932, issues of *The Family*, pp. 17-18.

their child will seek, with equal desperation, traces of this child ten years later. Of course, the reverse may happen. A child that is welcomed today may be rejected three years later. The father may become jealous of the child, or at least irritated or restless because of the mother's preoccupation with it. A woman who thrilled to her first experience with motherhood may resent the tiring wear of the toddler stage.

COMMON CONTRIBUTIONS BY CHILDREN TO PARENTS

Recognizing the individual and changing character of the child's effect upon the family, we shall attempt to set forth here some of the contributions which are apparent to the objective observer.

The Child and Family Interaction.

The coming of children increases the number of personal relationships and thus the range and complexity of the interactive processes within the family. This touches upon a subject of fundamental sociological importance. The relationship between the size of a group and the nature of the interactive processes within it has been a social problem of perennial interest. Perhaps no people have been more aware of its importance than were the ancient Greeks. The Greek concept of the city-state, which was but a village community in an advanced stage of development, was the result of their judgment as to the best available political compromise between the two conflicting demands for social order and individual liberty. A smaller unit than the city-state would make it insecure; a large one would prove to be tyrannical. Both Plato and Aristotle showed an awareness of this problem and advanced definite ideas concerning the most desirable size of the group. Plato's ideal city was to be limited to the conveniently divisible number of 5040 free citizens, plus their families and slaves; Aristotle, advocate of careful study rather than of wishful thinking, concluded that a state with more than 10,000 citizens would be impractical. "A state," he insisted, "can begin to exist only when it has attained a population sufficient for a good life in the political community . . . but there must be a limit. And what should be the limit can be easily ascertained by experience."⁵

In more recent times, Simmel has emphasized the quantitative

⁵ *Politics*, translated by Benjamin Jowett, The Clarendon Press, London, 1920, pp. 267-268.

determinants in social forms and processes. "To every definite number of elements there correspond . . . a specific sociological form, a characteristic organization, and a definite degree of firmness of texture."⁶ Becker and Von Wiese have touched upon the matter at various points—the dynamic interaction of relations, types of plurality patterns, and the systematic classification of groups on the basis of size.⁷ Similarly Wirth, in analyzing urbanism as a way of life, emphasizes the significance of the size of the population aggregate in relation to the interactive process between its members.⁸

The Law of Family Interaction.

Quintilian, the famous Roman rhetorician of the "Silver Age," once remarked that "for exploring human nature, one household is large enough." In keeping with this observation, the thesis is here presented that the relation of the size of the group to the complexity of its interrelationships may be stated with the precision of a mathematical law. This law is presented under the name of the Law of Family Interaction.

By way of preliminary explanation, what happens within the family with the coming of each child may be stated simply and graphically as follows:

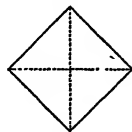
The relations of husband and wife are like this:



Those of a husband, wife, and child can be diagramed like this:



Those of a husband, wife, and two children look like this:

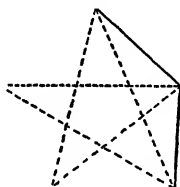


⁶ Nicholas J. Spykman, *The Social Theory of Georg Simmel*, University of Chicago Press, 1925, p. 129.

⁷ Howard Becker, and Leopold Von Wiese, *Systematic Sociology*, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, 1932.

⁸ Louis Wirth, "Urbanism as a Way of Life," *American Journal of Sociology*, July, 1938, pp. 10-14.

Those of a husband, wife, and three children look like this:



Within every family, there are two variables which submit to precise mathematical determination. One of these is the number of members in the family, i.e., the size of the group; the other is the number of personal relationships between its members. If these two variables are considered mathematically, what happens with the addition of each new member of the family group may be set forth in the following two sets of numbers:

Number of persons	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8
Number of personal relationships	1, 3, 6, 10, 15, 21, 28

Family life begins customarily with two members, husband and wife, and one set of personal relationships. The advent of a new member, such as a child, increases the number of persons by one, to a total of three, but the number of personal relationships by two, i.e., from one to three. The coming of another member increases the size of the group from three to four, but the number of personal relationships from three to six, i.e., by three.

Considering these two series of numbers, the first is a series of ordinary numbers, changing in the simplest arithmetic progression in whole numbers; the second is a series of triangular numbers. The law may be stated, then, as follows: *With the addition of each person to a family or primary group, the number of persons increases in the simplest arithmetical progression in whole numbers, and the number of personal interrelationships within the group increases in the order of triangular numbers.*

The mathematical formula involved may be set forth as follows:

x = the number of personal interrelationships

y = the number of persons

$$x = \frac{y^2 - y}{2}$$

The basic implication of this law is that every increase in the number of members of a family (or other primary group) results in more than a corresponding increase in the number of personal interrelationships, and that the larger the group becomes, the more disproportionate is the increase. It seems obvious that this fact should have great meaning in a study of the interactive process, with applications not only for the family but for various types of group functioning. We shall concern ourselves, however, with its meaning for family life.

1. Applying this law to family relationships, one is impressed with the actual complexity of life in families of even moderate size, especially for the young child. Consider, for example, a family of five, consisting of father, mother, and three children. A total of ten sets of personal relationships prevails within this family; and because of the close proximity and intimate nature of family life, there is a continuing awareness of each of them on the part of all the members of the family group.

One is apt to overlook the significance of the mere size of the household for the young child. The writer has recently studied the case of Helen K., who at five years of age is nervous, high-strung, and overstimulated, with spells of nervous vomiting. Helen is an only child; but in her 2½-story home of moderate size there live, in addition to her father and mother, two grandparents, one paternal, the other maternal. Two servants are also in the home daily. With seven persons in the home, there are twenty-one sets of personal relationships. In at least ten of the twenty-one, there is some emotional strain and tension. Helen is the person most constantly present in the household. It seems apparent that the size of this household unit, when translated into the number of personal relationships, tells much about Helen's problem.

2. On the other hand, the proposed law clarifies what the loss of one member may mean to the interactive process of a family. Just as the addition of one member increases the number of relationships in exact keeping with the number of members already in the group, so does the withdrawal of one member similarly decrease the range and complexity of the interactive process. This becomes particularly significant in a small family. In a family of three, the loss of one member reduces the number of relationships by two-thirds of the former number; in the case of a family of four, the reduction amounts to one-half. The law has peculiar significance, then, in analyzing the effects of the loss of a parent, for example, in military service, or through death, divorce, de-

sertion, and the like. The family's loss of one of its members has its quantitative dimensions, dependent upon the size of the group.

3. The Law of Family Interaction throws peculiar light upon the nature and role of the larger families of former days. Consider, for instance, some families of colonial America. Benjamin Franklin came from a Boston family of seventeen children. In a family of nineteen members, there would be 176 sets of interrelationships. One wonders whether Franklin was led as a young man to leave his family to seek a career or to escape the complex life of his primary group setting. Patrick Henry was one of nineteen children. If all these and both parents were living, there were 210 sets of interactive relationships in the Henry household; and again one is led to wonder if this complex setting may not have conditioned his vehement insistence upon liberty. There is Chief Justice John Marshall, who was the first of fifteen children. May not his judicial temperament have developed through his experiences as the oldest son in carrying adjudicating responsibility for the 105 relationships which existed among the Marshall children?

4. The larger family of former generations is often compared with the small, immediate family of today. Usually, such comparisons are vague and expressed in rather general terms. The proposed Law of Family Interaction enables a precise mathematical comparison between the two in terms of the exact number of interactive relationships. In a family of four members, which is a typically sized contemporary family, there are six sets of personal relationships; in a family of twelve, such as was characteristic of a century ago, there are 66 sets. Such a comparison reveals the precise nature of the revolutionary change in the intimate response pattern of the average family member which has come about as the result of the small-family system.

The enormity of such a change in the intimate life of the individual precipitates questions of great importance. What is its significance for the social development and needs of individuals? What is the significance of the small-family system of today, thus mathematically appraised, in the socialization of the child? What is its meaning in terms of the socioemotional security of the individual family member? Does this revolution in the intimate interactive life of the individual explain the devotion of contemporary youth to the larger economic and political associations? Does it explain the eagerness of the emotionally isolated individual of today to participate in mass emotional movements?

5. Finally, the Law of Family Interaction emphasizes the fact that with each child there is an increasing extension and complexity of social experience within the family, with more possibility, on the one hand, for satisfactory stimulus and response. What this means for the individual member of the family depends on his ability to enlarge the capacity for such intimate relationships as the family makes possible. Some persons have this ability to a great degree, others almost wholly lack it. This is why the coming of children enriches the life of one family and results in the disorganization or disintegration of another.

6. One final comment should be made in regard to the proposed Law of Family Interaction. Although stated as a law and expressed in terms of a mathematical formula, no claim of mathematical precision is intended. It will be evident at once that human relationships are far too complex and multidimensional to be forced into any mathematical formula. Obviously, then, the law should be regarded as a rough approximation or summary of a highly complex process, the mathematical formula indicating the general ratio of increase in family relationships resulting from the addition of new members, rather than an exact computation.⁹

The Expansion of Family Interests.

Just as the coming of children broadens and complicates the interactive processes within the family, so there occurs a similar development in regard to its interests. With the birth of the first child, parents become attentive to a number of matters they had not considered before; or, if they have considered them previously, they do so now with new meaning and intentness. One is reminded here of Popenoe's statement that a man who does not marry is only one-third alive, that married people may be two-thirds alive, but that only those who experience parenthood may be alive fully.¹⁰

First to arise are often problems of family finance, with particular emphasis upon future prospects. Occupational ambitions of the father

⁹ For a criticism of this proposed law, the reader is referred to Ernest Beaglehole, "A Critique of 'The Measurement of Family Interaction,'" *American Journal of Sociology*, September, 1945, pp. 145-147. Also, since the original publication of this law, my attention has been called to an earlier analysis of the essential principle by U. A. Graciunas, in Luther Gulick and L. Urwick, *Papers on the Science of Administration*, Institute of Public Administration, Columbia University, New York, 1937.

¹⁰ Paul Popenoe, *Modern Marriage*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1927, p. 26.

may be sharpened, and long-range plans for careers may be made for the first time. Interest in life insurance often becomes vital at this stage of a family's history, or enlarged insurance programs may be undertaken. What kinds of insurance should be purchased—for immediate protection, for the future education of children, to meet the ordinary hazards to life and limb? Next to receive attention are questions concerning the home. Is home ownership desirable? Is it feasible under existing conditions? What kind of home is it best to purchase? What financing plans are most desirable?

Interests like these quickly shade into questions concerning the community. What kind of community is this? Is this the place to rear children? To buy a home? What, if any, are the zoning restrictions? What kind of people live in this community? Who are the people that dominate it? How politician-ridden is this place? What is the tax rate? What is the status-conferring rating of this area? One particular aspect of the organized life of any community, which many parents consider of great importance, is its educational facilities. Are there nursery schools in the neighborhood? Is there a publicly maintained kindergarten? What is the quality of the instruction in the school system? How do the schools of the particular district rate educationally? Roman Catholic families will consider the availability of parochial-school instruction. Upper-class families may be interested in private-school facilities. In addition to the school system, many parents will want to know about Sunday-school and church facilities, provisions for playgrounds, public libraries, community sports programs, and a great variety of other community resources and facilities.

These and many similar questions become vital to adults when they achieve parenthood. The answers at which they arrive become the essence of the forces which distribute and segregate our contemporary populations. A large proportion of the movement of families within large cities, between city and suburbs and from one suburb to another, represents choices and plans for the children in these families. Studies of one suburb in the Philadelphia area show that more than 80 per cent of its families located there "for the sake of the children." They come more specifically, writes Jones, "because their children will have better opportunity for satisfactory educational and recreational lives, and because these things contribute to better health."¹¹

¹¹ Arthur H. Jones, *Cheltenham Township*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1940, pp. 51-52.

Moreover, it is not simply the local community and the larger society of the present which become of interest and importance to parents with the birth of their children; it is also their future development and welfare. The child is the future of the family; and no parent with the slightest interest in his child can ever be wholly unconcerned with the world of tomorrow, for it is in that world that his child will become, like the parent, an adult member. "After me the deluge" may be the philosophy of a cynical bachelor; it can never be the sentiment of a normal parent.

Emotional Satisfactions of Long Duration.

The child not only broadens the interests of parents in community and social matters of all kinds, but gives to most parents emotionally satisfying interests of lifelong duration. Nothing is perhaps more essential to a happy life than such interests. Many people are fortunate in acquiring an interest or interests of this kind. They may be of many different kinds. One person may find such an interest in the quest for political power, climbing from one post of political preferment to another; the next person may find it in the winning of wealth and its use for the acquisition of a few selected objectives; a third may find it through his creations on an artist's canvas, the pages of a book, the test tube of the laboratory, or in the ability to drive an automobile on the sand dunes of Utah faster than any other person. For vast numbers of people, life interests of a satisfactory sort are difficult or impossible to obtain. Great masses of men are condemned perforce to monotonous labor and to a rather drab existence. Such persons may find, as can all others and as many do, abiding life interests in the careers of those whom they conceive to be like themselves—their children and their children's children. Of a truth are such interests lifelong in duration and emotionally satisfying in kind.

It is true that there is much exploitation of children to satisfy the emotional needs of parents and other related adults; more extended consideration will be given to the resulting problems in a later chapter. But such cases, let it be emphasized here, are pathological or problem-creating only in the degree or the form of development of what in other families is a wholly normal relationship. Emotional exploitation of children is news; behind the news are innumerable parents who find in their interests in children deep and abiding satisfactions without exacting any crippling bondage. This is the essence of normal and

happy parenthood. Particularly do these emotional satisfactions tend to grow in importance as parents and children grow older. Earlier in life, parents are more active, more concerned with their own achievements and hopes. Life's compensations tend to come more adequately from the range of one's own activities. It is only with the passing of time, the hardening of circumstances, the reconstruction of values, and the greater need for emotional satisfactions from without that one turns normally to the developing careers of one's own children.

The Opportunity to Relive Life.

This acquisition of lifelong interests suggests another of the child's possible contributions to his parents. It is the opportunity, in a sense, to live their lives over again. This is something which most persons, including those who will not admit it, would like to do; it is something which, in the literal sense of the phrase, is obviously impossible. What every modern student of parent-child relationships emphasizes, however, is that the parent sees in the child his nearest approach to such an opportunity. As Plant says:

Early sensing that there is no living over life with the advantages of learning from mistakes of the first trial, we quickly find the next best outlet—that of living out these dreams and unrequited hopes in the lives of the children to come. Indeed, those in children's work would be quite without clients if children could live "de novo"—instead of being expected to live out the lives of their parents. Every social worker is acquainted with this problem and what it means to children—these moldings of the child's life to bring it into conformity with what the parent has been looking for in the way of picking up the lost thread. As soon as we know that a child is coming in the family, we "hope that it will be a boy" or "hope it will be a girl"—not having the courtesy even to await the child's birth before beginning to fix upon it the pattern we expect it to fill. Early in the childhood of the parents this pattern was being formed—the tom-boy child dreaming that her child would be a butterfly, the shy child that his boy would be a football hero. We enter here so sincerely one of the great and intriguing fields of conduct disorder. . . . There are few matters so common and impelling as the need that the individual has for mending the broken threads of his own life in the growing lives of those over whom he has a feeling of control. It is for this that the adult looks to the family experience.¹²

This tendency of parents to seek to relive their lives in those of their children leads inevitably to a foisting upon the children of activities and pursuits not of their own choice. This practice is spoken of in

¹² Plant, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-14.

mental hygiene circles as projection. It is a practice extensively indulged in by parents, and it has much meaning for educators and for students of behavior problems. A definite factor in parent-child relationships, it will be discussed more fully in a subsequent chapter.¹³

The Control of Human Development.

The parents' effort to relive their lives through the careers of their children is in turn but part of a much larger story. This is the fact that the child gives to the parent control over another person, and of a most intimate and comprehensive kind. It is a control that is all-pervasive. Arising as a form of physical control because of the infant's complete helplessness, it comes, as time goes on, to cover every aspect of the child's life and to be supported by the entire range of society's sanctions.

The acquisition through parenthood of control over another person is one of life's major experiences, and its significance may be considered from various points of view. There can be no doubt, for example, of its emotionally satisfying nature. Control of a child satisfies the parent's will to power. This is a deeply rooted desire. All persons have it, and they seek to satisfy it in many ways. We begin to seek it as children in playing with dolls and animal pets. Courtship is, in more ways than meet the eye, a search for power. Much of our adult life involves its quest. It is this age-old, universal desire which is satisfied in the parent with the coming of children, and the entire range of parenthood is from one angle a constant exercise of the power of control over another person.

A good deal has been said in recent years about the fact that some parents utilize this power over their children to secure relief from personal thwartings and maladjustments in their lives outside of the home. In other words, the disgruntled parent can come home and take it out on his child. The father who is forced into insignificance and obscurity in his job returns home to restore his ego in an exaggerated obedience from his son. The employee who is "barked at by the boss" all day can compensate at night by "laying down the law" to his little William. The mother who was "cut" at her bridge club in the afternoon takes it out on her daughter that night. In these and in many other similar cases, the child becomes for the parent a vehicle for the transposition of satisfactions, as discussed in Chapter IV.

¹³ Kimball Young, "The Projection of Parental Ambitions," *The Family*, May, 1927, pp. 67 ff.

This control over another person, particularly of a relatively helpless individual and one's own flesh and blood, brings with it inevitably some sense of responsibility for the obligations involved. For many people, the responsibility that children bring is the first really vital and continuing one which they have been called upon to assume. The reaction to this responsibility is, of course, individual; there is involved essentially a test of the individual character. Parenthood, in other words, sets the stage for the development of parents. It is a testing of the potentialities of personality. If people have the possibilities of growth within them, what better can call them forth than the experience of parenthood?

To those who see in their control over a child an opportunity to direct the development of a human being, this responsibility may lead to a deep and continuing search for life's values. What do I want my child to be? So far as I can influence and direct his development, what are the important and worth-while goals to be sought? These questions arise with the birth of the first child; they persist throughout infancy, adolescence, and into early manhood and womanhood. Reference has been made on an earlier page to the tendency of parents to answer these questions on the basis of their own unfulfilled dreams and ambitions. Important as the role of such projections may be, even allowing for all the unconscious manifestations of them which the psychoanalyst may find, there is more to the story than that. Parents are constantly being confronted in their experience as parents with questions of life's values. Parenthood is a daily round of decisions on the question of what things are important, and in what order.

The child's questions arise early. "Daddy, what is God?" "Mother, why are people poor?" "Is what the Sunday-school teacher tells us true?" "Daddy, our neighbor says we shall not walk on her grass." "May we go to the carnival?" "Is there a Santa Claus?" These and literally a million other questions are asked. Many of them are answered, sometimes in direct spoken words, often in glances, grimaces, or gestures. The simpler the answer, the clearer the thought behind it; the clearer the thought, the more clear cut the decision or judgment of the values involved.

Beyond the almost endless stream of questions arising as the child is adjusting to his cultural setting are the plans made by parents for their children. These involve choices—in expenditures of time and effort, in schools, in social contacts, in occupations, in forms of be-

havior, in spheres of activity. All of these involve decisions, and these decisions represent value judgments. From one standpoint, all life is a constant series of choices of life values. These choices come to be made more definitely as they are the more consciously imposed upon those for whom we have assumed responsibility.

Insight into Life's Processes.

This survey of the child's contributions to his parents would be incomplete without reference to the fact that children give parents an intimate insight into the processes of life—its appearance, growth, and development. Because of our inability to consider ourselves with sufficient objectivity, we need to see this process at work in other persons and in other forms of life. Through the long centuries of "man's rough road," he has seen it constantly in the seeds he sowed, the harvests he reaped, the animals he domesticated, as well as in the abundant progeny he brought into the world. Today, an increasing percentage of people live in cities where they neither sow nor reap—crops; where a cow can be seen only in the zoological garden, and where even a pup is a luxury, and a nuisance, to be spayed or boarded out periodically in order to keep domestic and neighborly peace.

This change in the range of many people's contacts with living things resulting from the widespread substitution of urban for rural life makes experience with the birth and rearing of children all the more important if the processes of life are to remain part of the content of conscious thinking. Let it be emphasized here that there is a difference between an abstract understanding of a process, and constant contacts with its concrete manifestations. The insight into the processes of life development which the nurture of one's own children gives covers much of what in academic circles constitutes the substance of biology, psychology, and the related life sciences. Constant contact with growing children gives meaning to the findings of scientists in these fields; also, such experience acts as a corrective for much of what passes as scientific achievement.

Insight into the Meaning of Life.

What parenthood brings to one, in the ultimate analysis, is some comprehension of the meaning of life and of the individual's role in the cosmic scheme of things. Stated in its simplest form, it is this: Each person is but a temporary trustee of the life stream.

One comes to sense this first, perhaps, with one's possessions. Yesterday, you owned them absolutely. You gave them the care that such absolute possession deserved, for their preservation was as signally important as your own life; they became as vital as the maintenance and development of your own personality. Today, your child uses them carelessly, and destructively perhaps. You squirm a bit at first, but, after all, it is *your* child violating *your* possessions; and you resolve the conflict finally so that the violation of what was yours dissolves into the development of your child that is. These possessions may be your old toy, your book, your chair, your watch, or your house. Somewhat later, you experience the same changing evaluation of your energy. Originally, your energy was yours, to expend for your pleasure and your development. It was so insensibly a part of you that your use of it could not be conceived of except in terms of yourself and your interest. With continuing parenthood, this, too, shades gradually into the feeling that every parent knows, where your energy and even your life blood become the small change you pay to satisfy the passing needs of your children. It is at such moments, when a parent has given his all to the insatiable demands of his child, that there comes the true meaning of one's relation to life: that each generation is but a trustee of life, for all its values and all its possessions. Thus, in the larger sense, we never own anything; for everything that can be owned belongs to time, and time is endless. This, then, is the real end of life, that we receive, as it were, the torch from one generation, to carry it and per chance to brighten it, but ultimately always to turn it over to the next generation. This it is that the child brings, in some varying form of expression, to each parent who has the capacity to perceive it.

SUMMARY

1. Studies of family-child relationships, being made by grown-ups, are adultcentric. This is another illustration of man's difficulty in studying himself in the proper perspective. This chapter represents an effort to show what the child contributes to the parents.

2. What a child contributes is, of course, a highly individual matter, dependent chiefly upon (a) the child's characteristics; (b) the attitudes of the parents, both toward parenthood and toward children; and (c) the larger cultural determinants.

3. The child's contribution to the parents is constantly changing.

Family life is a living, growing thing, in which attitudes and evaluations are constantly changing.

4. Common contributions of children to parents include (a) an increase in the range and complexity of family interaction, (b) an expansion of family interests, (c) emotional satisfactions of lifelong duration, (d) the opportunity to relive life, (e) the control of human development, (f) insight into life's processes, and (g) insight into the true meaning of life.

Part III:

Facets of Family Life

Family Table Talk



Preceding chapters have emphasized two basic steps in the social development of the child. One is his introduction into the process of living with other persons; the other, his contact with the accumulated modes of living and thinking which constitute the cultural system in which he lives. Both of these are acquired by the child first through his family. These two processes are the essence of child rearing and, on the cultural side, comprise the family's role as the connecting link between successive generations. Much has been written about the importance of what the family does in these respects, but far less attention has been given to the mechanism by which the family achieves these ends. It is to a consideration of this mechanism and some of its more important aspects that this and the succeeding four chapters are devoted.

FORMAL INSTRUCTION THROUGH THE FAMILY

The helplessness of the human infant requires a long period of nurture and protection, and it is part of the economy of nature that parents conserve and transmit their experience, knowledge, and understanding to their children during this time. Thus the family is destined by its very nature to be the primary educational agency in the life of the child, and in simpler forms of society a large part of the child's education is obtained from the family. The ancient Jewish household, for example, was the only educational institution for most Jewish folk until the time of Christ, when, for the first time, through the leadership of Rabbi Joshua ben Gamla, schools apart from the home were instituted in the towns and villages of Palestine. Similarly, in colonial American times, both industrial and intellectual training were largely given in the home. It is only as cultural resources and economic means accumulate, and the social organization becomes more

differentiated and complex, that specialized educational institutions develop to which the family turns over many of its functions.¹

Part of this educational process in the family life of more primitive societies, while lacking the formality of present-day schools, was relatively concrete and direct: a projection of the family routine upon the child. To understand the nature and scope of this educational process in earlier times, two facts must be kept in mind. One is the concrete and vocational nature of what the child was taught. The primitive family was engrossed in the all-absorbing task of making a living, and the child was taught as early and as effectively as possible to do his share.² The other is the fact that earlier the child was reared in the extended or kinship group form of family in which there were likely to be many more pupils and teachers than in the immediate family of our contemporary urban culture.

The greater part of the family's role in child rearing, however, is achieved through indirection, in ways that are subtle and devious, for the most part unconscious, and as a by-product the family routine. The family might be spoken of as a conditioning agency, and what happens to the child is by way of absorption from the life of the family as a whole. In other words, the family lives its collective life—it eats, talks, laughs, argues, wrangles, its members go about their allotted tasks—and in this life the young child grows and learns to live.

A METHODOLOGICAL NOTE

It becomes evident at once that the mechanism whereby the family conditions the child must be studied, not from the standpoint of the child merely, but in terms of family operation. It is the process of family life as a whole, not a part of it, which must concern us. This raises a question of methodology. How can this subtle, detailed, comprehensive process be studied? How can the outsider obtain a segment of a family in operation in order to analyze it objectively?

Obviously, the approach must be as casual and indirect as is the family's operation. There is something of the ludicrous in the method

¹ Cf. Ernest R. Groves, *The Family and Its Social Functions*, J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia, 1940, chap. 10; also, *Recent Social Trends*, MacGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., New York, 1933, vol. i, chap. 13.

² Recently the author had the opportunity to observe this in the case of a family living under comparatively simple conditions. The eight-year-old son was given very specific and direct instruction in a series of tasks immediately related to the family's means of livelihood.

of the formal interview, in which the interviewer confronts the person or family to be studied and says, as it were. "Proceed now and go through your routine so that I may study and record it." First and foremost, the family in operation must be studied without its knowledge, otherwise the process will not be natural. The essence of our methodology, then, must be the gathering and recording of data without the family's awareness of the fact. Its object must be to hold up a mirror, not for the family or its members to see themselves in, as is the technique of psychoanalysis or of the non-directive interview,³ but for objective analysis by the student. This, we recall at once, is the method of the drama. People talk, they act, you observe and listen, you understand the role played by the actor, the character he portrays, and the operation of the plot. Similarly, the novelist utilizes this method of portraying his characters by simply permitting them to talk. Sinclair Lewis has utilized this method, with devastating effect.

The recording of a family in operation can best be achieved through the method of first-person reporting. Attention was called to this method for purposes of scientific analysis a number of years ago, and various persons working professionally with problem cases have utilized it over a period of years for its revealing as well as its therapeutic effectiveness. In 1928, Burgess, speaking on how social case records might be made of greater value, suggested that the characters be allowed to speak for themselves. "The first requisite necessary to reveal . . . the person as he really is to himself would be to enter the record in his own language."⁴ Such reporting enables us, he continued, to participate in the life history of the individual, in his memories, hopes, attitudes, plans, and philosophy of life.

It was Clifford Shaw, research sociologist at the Institute for Juvenile Research in Chicago, according to Burgess, who first developed consciously the method of first-person reporting and carried it further than anyone else in this country. His book *The Jack-Roller* is a conspicuous illustration of the use of a delinquent boy's own story, as are his subsequent *The Natural History of a Delinquent Career* and *Brothers in Crime*. Not only is his report on the case of Angelo, presented at the meetings of the American Sociological Society held at St. Louis in

³ Carl R. Rogers, "The Nondirective Method as a Technique for Social Research," *American Journal of Sociology*, January, 1945, pp. 279-284.

⁴ Ernest W. Burgess, "What Social Case Records Should Contain to Be Useful for Sociological Interpretation," *Social Forces*, June, 1928, p. 527.

1926, a splendid illustration of a case record in which the persons involved are presented in their own words, but his verbatim report of a family conversation in that record is the first utilization of the technique emphasized in this chapter.⁵

In summary, then, it is proposed that family operation, with particular reference to the process of child conditioning, can be studied to advantage through the records of family conversations reported in a form in which each person speaks for himself, and that such records be obtained without the knowledge of the family. To say that these records are difficult to obtain offers, of course, no comment on their value; to point out that they will contain much that is trivial and inconsequential is to confess that bushels of chaff may hide the scattered grain; to contend that they need to be supplemented with other accompanying information is but a recognition of the relative inadequacy of all data. The method here proposed is to be identified as *the family life recording technique*.

THE VALUE OF FAMILY TABLE TALK

Experimental studies made by the William T. Carter Foundation at the University of Pennsylvania suggest the value of transcripts of family table talk for purposes of studying family operation. When this is recorded without the knowledge of the family, one is able to study the family routine much as the scientist observes amoeba swimming about in beef broth.

The significance of the family meal has long been recognized by non-scientific groups. Religion has long recognized its intimate importance. Divine family worship at mealtime has been a common observance and is still continued in the offering of "grace." Christianity immortalizes it in the ceremony of the Last Supper, and renews this recognition endlessly in the continuance of the communion rite. Dramatists stage it with frequent effectiveness. To the novelist it is a constant device for character delineation or plot facilitation. Even the essayists, like Dr. Holmes, build their sage observations around the framework of the breakfast table.

Students of family and child problems may regard family table talk from two main points of view. One is as a form of family interaction. Here the concern is with the relationships between the personalities in

⁵ Clifford Shaw, "Case Study Method," *Publications of the American Sociological Society*, 1927, vol. xxi, pp. 149-157.

the family group, with particular reference to the functioning and formation of personal traits. Also, as far as the children are concerned, there is a good deal of emphasis upon habit formation, such as habits of eating, sitting, speaking, and the like. A second approach sees the family meal as a vehicle for the transmission of the family culture to its younger members. Here the chief point of interest is the role and techniques of family table talk in this continuing process. Before proceeding to the two main points of view just identified, certain general considerations concerning the social nature of the family meal should be noted. Accordingly, the main body of this chapter is presented in three parts: first, the social nature of the family meal; second, its analysis as a form of family interaction; and third, its role in the transmission of the family culture to the younger members.

THE SOCIAL NATURE OF THE FAMILY MEAL

1. The family meal is a distinct aspect of the family's life. Warner and Lunt have recently called attention⁶ to the fact that the two rooms in which the family spends most time as a group are the living and the dining rooms. Of the two, the dining room and the family meal are confined, except on definitely recognized occasions, to the intimate participation of the family group. In upper-class families, large and attractive living rooms, and more leisure, tend to emphasize the greater importance of the living room; in lower-class families, the opposite of these facts makes the dining room often the more important or only social center of the household.

2. It is at the dining table, and particularly at dinnertime, that the family is apt to be at its greatest ease, both physically and psychologically. The times when the family is at its best are perhaps most often on the occasion of its more leisured dining, just as the family entertaining at the dining table is the family on exhibition, putting its best foot forward. One is reminded here of the comment of Dr. Holmes that a dinner party of proper intellectual elements "is the last triumph of civilization over barbarism. Nature and art combine to charm the senses; the equatorial zone of the system is soothed by well-studied artifices; the faculties are off duty, and fall into their natural attitudes; you see wisdom in slippers and science in a short jacket."⁷

⁶ W. Lloyd Warner and Paul Lunt, *The Social Life of a Modern Community*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1941, p. 105.

⁷ Oliver Wendell Holmes, *The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table*, James Osgood and Company, Boston, 1878, p. 71.

This more felicitous generalization about the family meal does not, however, mean to overlook the fact that the family meal also at times represents the family in haste, operating with direct bluntness, or the family at war, disturbing the emotions of its members and upsetting the gastric process. The family meal, in short, represents the family in action, focused upon a common interest and a task so absorbing as to let it operate offguard in other important respects.

3. The family meal, especially the main one of the day, holds the members of the family together over an extended period of time. The length of time, and the details of the occasion, naturally vary from one family to another; but, in general, a meal is an extended session of the family personnel, with a relatively high rate of attendance. Mealtime is the family council time, particularly today when under the stress of the differing interests of its various members the family is not likely to get together at any other time. Family prayer time and family councils both are found to a lessening extent in contemporary society.

4. It is significant, in any attempt to appraise the social significance of the family meal, to recall that its role is one of continuing repetition. Many families meet around the table three times a day; most families do so at least once a day. Over a period of years, the simple arithmetic of the situation is enough to emphasize its quantitative effectiveness.

5. Finally, it is obvious that the social significance of the family meal, and the role of table talk, vary from one social class to another. Referring again to Warner and Lunt, who concerned themselves so largely with class and status systems, we are reminded that

. . . meals in the home have different values which depend upon the social status of the family. The upper-class family, for instance, spends more time over its breakfast and endows this meal with more group significance than do families in other classes.

In upper-class families there are generally servants to perform a large part of the secular household ritual through their daily rounds of tasks and duties which keep the house in order. The mistress of the house ordinarily superintends the activities of her servants, but she does not herself do any of the actual work. However, she and other members of the family perform definite ritual acts which top off the work of their paid employees: arranging flowers; carving at table; lighting the fire; and pouring at tea. Maids serve at the table according to a strictly formalized routine, while the food is prepared by a cook hired especially for that work. Maids are outfitted in uniforms of different types according to the time of day and the specific duties in which they are engaged, their dress symbolizing their subordination to and separation from the family whom they serve. The leisure time

accruing to the family that can maintain servants allows more frequent performance of social activities which bring them conspicuously to the attention of the remainder of the community, and the men indulge in a variety of sports, intellectual interests and hobbies, and community activities by means of which they express and constantly reaffirm their social position.

All of the activities which surround the preparation of the table and the serving and eating of the meal are demonstrations of ritual relations between members of the family, the servants, and objects which have esthetic and traditional value in the house. They are also expressions of the meal as a family communion. Non-members of the immediate family—such as collateral kin and clique members—who are invited in to eat at the family table may be said to participate in the “private communion” of the family and household, a secular but highly organized ritual. These ritual elements surrounding the daily life within a household tend to increase in number and intensity of function with the height of the stratification of the family.⁸

TABLE TALK AS A FORM OF FAMILY INTERACTION

The role of the group in the determination of personality is a recognized sociological dictum. The primary character of the family as a group, and its fundamental importance in the development of personal traits, particularly of children, are equally well established. From what has been said concerning the social nature of family table talk, it is obvious that much of the family's interactive process takes place during the family meal. Certain aspects of this process call for special comment.

1. The individual's role in the family group comes to be clearly defined around the table. Since the entire family is together, relationships between individual members are brought out into the open. Feuding members are seated at opposite sides of the table, for example. Covenants secretly arrived at become manifest. Group choices are made—in seating arrangements, in the serving of food, in the assignment of left-overs, in priorities in conversation.

Transcripts of family table talk may reveal with unmistakable clarity the dominating role of one member. The following record, taken from the files of the William T. Carter Foundation, will serve for purposes of illustration.

The Iredell family consists of a father; a mother; a son Bill, aged nine years; a daughter Helen, aged twenty months; and an unmarried

⁸ Warner and Lunt, *op. cit.*, pp. 105–106.

female relative, aged twenty-six years. The Iredell family is at the dinner table. The family cat has just wandered into the dining room.

Relative. He's fun to watch. (Helen slides from her chair and takes hold of cat.)

Helen. Helen. Helen.

I give that cat two weeks to live.

Oh, look at that. Helen, don't do that. Oh, oh.

Put a blanket on him. Here is another blanket.

Look at him. He is so frightened, he's shaking. Oh.

Mrs. Iredell. Let's forget about the cat and go on with our meal.

Relative. Helen, don't. (Looks at Mr. Iredell, who is making a memo on an envelope.)

I bet five dollars I know what he is doing.

Helen. Take it out and let it

Bill is nice with the cat, but Helen

That cat is—

No, let it alone.

Mrs. Iredell (speaking to Helen). Shall we put the cat to sleep?

Relative. Mummie says it's time to put the cat to sleep.

Now look at what she is—

Oh, you are hurting its foot.

Put that box away.

(Relative looks toward Mr. Iredell who has just made another memo.)

Relative. There he sits, Old Andrew H. Brown. Five million, ten million.

Listen, Helen, the cat can't breathe.

Don't hold your arm so high.

Mrs. Iredell. Now please, let us forget about the cat and eat.

Relative. Well, she is too rough with it.

Your cat won't live long.

She's mauled it enough for tonight.

Yes, sir, I'll give that cat—

(Mr. Iredell is about to speak for the first time since the meal began.)

Relative. Who was it that I used to put into the big carriage and wheel all around? (Looks coyly at Helen.)

Say, you know the clerks in the stores are the snootiest lot—

Listen, Helen. And you, too, Bill. Do you know that Christmas is only four weeks away. What do you want Santa Claus to bring?

Bill (who has thus far been avidly stuffing himself with food). I know what I want. Father, you know, too, don't you?

Relative. Does Bill have school tomorrow?

Do you know that blouse I paid Mary three dollars to block?

The trouble with her is that she is too lazy.

Not in my ear. (This to Helen, who evidently is trying to whisper to her.)

The skirt fits me beautifully.

At this point, Mr. Iredell leaves the dining room, with his meal unfinished. The Iredells are described as a quiet, gentle-spoken family, with the exception of the relative. The latter is described as a neurotically talkative bachelor girl who can best be characterized as a "perpetual master of ceremonies." She dominates the Iredell household, which thus far has organized its entire life around her conversation, her wishes, and her insistences.

2. The family is an audience for individual performance, chiefly conversational. Through these performances family members reveal their abilities to, and try them out, on each other. One is reminded here again of Dr. Holmes' observation, "There are little-minded people whose thoughts move in such small circles that five minutes of conversation gives you an arc long enough to determine their whole curve." Even silences in table talk are an important part of its art. Again Holmes reminds us that "talking is like playing on the harp; there is as much in laying the hand on the strings to stop their vibrations, as in the twanging them to bring out the music."

3. This table audience, both in the responses which it gives to, and in those which it withholds from, its individual members, carries the greatest weight in the molding of personal traits. Its intimate nature and repetitive force make it often the family's best corrective disciplinarian. Children especially are frank—frequently quite brutally so—in their reactions to one another, and perhaps nowhere are they so with as much self-assurance as under the protective custody of the family meal.

This is the place to refer to the habit of squabbling at mealtime, so characteristic of many families. There are families in which few meals are completed without a quarrel or without some member leaving the table in tears, anger, or disgrace. In some families the meal is a tribunal or a disciplinary workshop rather than a ceremonial. Children are called on the carpet for misdeeds, lectured in regard to patterns of behavior, or nagged constantly about table manners.

It is pertinent to question the physiological effect of this upon the digestive processes and through them upon the entire chemistry of the body. Recent analyses of such processes by students of physiological chemistry point to the overwhelming importance of emotional upsets at mealtime. How one's stomach "flops" when upset around mealtime is an experience which many persons may be able to recall. Consider also the family in which there is a good deal of tension between adult

members. The family meal may come to be a duel of silence, with marked physiological as well as psychiatric effects.

4. One of the distinctive services of family interaction at mealtime is the development of the symbols of expression—again, particularly those of the children. All the members of the family participate in family table talk—from the youngest to the oldest and most erudite. Through this process, the family members enlarge one another's vocabulary. Children in particular acquire symbols to use in learning and in speaking. Much of one's knowledge about the precise meaning of words comes as a by-product to participating in family conversation. In other words, the family meal is a class in oral expression. In a family of any size, meals become "gab-fests." Two or three persons may be talking at the same time. Facility and quickness in expression constitute the price of admittance to the conversation.

5. The family meal represents the family's interaction in its most democratic mood. Now, more than at other times, the younger members get a chance to blossom verbally. Well-fed elders accept with good humor remarks from juveniles which otherwise would not be tolerated. Side conferences prevail also while the main program continues.

6. The family meal is a kind of personality clinic, with both students and clients in attendance. Especially is this true if the family is of any considerable size. Each member comes to be analyzed, dissected, catalogued, and processed by the other members. This is all the more devastating because it takes place before the entire group. Undesirable traits and personal weakness may be particularly identified and castigated.

7. Table talk serves a definite purpose in aiding children to learn the relative roles of the parents and adults in the family. Aunt Minnie jabbars away, does three-fourths of the talking, says little, and tends to be disregarded in family decisions. Mother defers to Daddy as a rule, but takes an emphatic stand at times. Daddy talks very little at the table. Even when they correct the children, Mother and Aunt Minnie turn to him for support. Repeatedly they suggest to him that he take disciplinary measures. Deference to him is constant and repeated. But Father is silent, his face is immobile. His few words to the children at the table, or even a look, suffice. The stereotype of the strong, silent father has been created. Under no other circumstances could the full-length process of this creation be so effectively imprinted upon the child's mind as at mealtime. A family meal, in other words, is like the

scene from a drama in which the personalities identify themselves to each other.

FAMILY TABLE TALK AND THE TRANSMISSION OF CULTURE

Sociologists agree that the family is the chief culture-transmitting agency in our society. The family introduces the child not only to his own particular culture, but also to that of the larger society. In this latter capacity, it not only interprets this larger culture, it creates attitudes toward it. Much of this happens as a by-product of family table talk. In this process the following aspects may be identified.

1. The family meal, particularly dinner, is the clearinghouse for most of the family's information, news, and experiences. Jack tells about the substitute teacher; Jane about the neighboring girl's new coat; Daddy refers to the fact that Mr. Davis is complaining about the number of government questionnaires, and threatens to go out of business; Mother thinks that Bill is coming down with the grippe. The dining table is like a crossroads through which flows the news of the world as the respective members of the family see it and experience it. Much of this traffic of information and ideas flows swiftly and unobtrusively past, noticed more in its absence than in its presence; but it is there for all to see, hear, and assimilate.

2. The family meal constantly serves as a forum for the discussion of matters of interest and concern to the various members. Questions are asked, answered, or evaded in turn. The range of topics covered may be wide and varied, or monotonous in the recurrence of a few items of interest. Significant for all are the topics meticulously avoided as well as those assiduously discussed. The selection of topics for the family forum is in itself highly indicative.

Considered as a forum, the family meal may take several different forms. First, it may be quite formal. Questions are obviously posed, and discussion is patently stimulated. For years one well-known member of the judiciary, known to the author, followed the practice of stating a proposition at the beginning of each dinner which his six children were asked to analyze and debate between soup and demitasse. Second, the mealtime forum may be informal and spontaneous. This is much more frequently the case. Questions arise in the course of the family conversation, and the discussion proceeds out of the fullness of the heart rather than from the prodding of the parent. Topics tend to succeed each other in kaleidoscopic fashion, and the argumentation

most often is both brief and direct. Finally, the family forum is often entirely incidental, scarcely recognized as a forum, in which views are expressed by a word, a silence, or a facial expression. Each family tends to have its own words, phrases, idioms, grimaces, signs, gestures, and the like, that are eloquent with meaning for all the members even if somewhat unintelligible to outsiders.

3. The family meal serves constantly as an evaluating conference, especially on the experiences, needs, and interests of the members. There is group discussion. Individual views are expressed, modified, and reconciled often as a family judgment, choice, decision, or attitude emerges. Whether arrived at experimentally in democratic conference or imposed by an autocratic parent, these evaluations are absorbed on the basis of their emotional relations to the family, so that the line between the two is often indistinct.

As far as the induction of the child into the culture of the family is concerned, this evaluating process in family table talk serves two purposes which Dr. Holmes long ago suggested in his *Autocrat of the Breakfast Table* as requirements for satisfactory conversation. One is agreement upon the ultimate beliefs; the other is agreement upon the secondary questions that depend upon these ultimate beliefs. In other words, table talk not only inducts the child into the fundamental idea patterns and values of the family culture, but also, because of its concrete nature, clarifies the concrete applications which follow therefrom.

4. The family meal often functions as a substitute for classroom instruction. This happens in several ways. First, there are the well-known staged conversations—as a rule, for the benefit of the younger children. Says Mother: “I heard today about a little boy who ran across the railroad tracks”; to which Father replies quite seriously: “I am glad that my children don’t do things like that.” Or Mother refers to a visit from Mrs. Terry and her daughter, who was very polite. “Oh, yes,” says Father, “you can tell that she is going to be quite an attractive young lady.”

Again, “lessons” for class instruction may be introduced by one of the children. Helen, aged twelve, tells of a neighbor’s daughter, a proverbial and perennial scapegoat. Father, who is envious of the neighboring father’s business success, expresses himself freely concerning the conduct of his neighbor’s daughter. Mother, who dislikes the mother, is equally heated. Without understanding the motives involved, Helen is quite impressed. The neighboring girl’s conduct *was* reprehensible.

Finally, many of the lessons learned at family meals are unplanned and spontaneous. "Katie kissed John," pipes up the well-known little brother, and in the wake of this disclosure there may follow either an eloquent silence, or a colorful discussion concerning kissing, John's intentions, John's job, Katie's prospects, and Mother's attitude toward early marriages. Such is perhaps the most common grist in the family round-the-table mill as it grinds, now slowly, now rapidly, but always exceeding fine.

5. Akin to these pedagogical functions are the stimulation and direction of the child's interests. If he has literary or artistic or mechanical interests, family table talk does much to stimulate or dampen their development. One is reminded again of Dr. Holmes: "Writing or printing is like shooting with a rifle; you may hit your reader's mind, or miss is—but talking is like playing at a mark with the pipe of an engine; if it is within reach, and you have time enough, you can't help hitting it."⁹

In many respects, family table talk may be likened to a university seminar on family culture that continues for a number of semesters. Both are similar in that there are designated reports (at times unscheduled), criticisms which vary with the prestige of the person making them, an exchange of points of view, and boredom for the more sophisticated members of the group. There is teaching, too, and inculcation of point of view; but these follow more from the give-and-take of informal discussion than from formal admonition. As is the case in most seminars, the discussion often rambles; assigned topics are disregarded; the procedure departs from the program which the seminar master (instructor or parent as the case may be) has devised; and seminar members leave the table before the discussion is concluded. Finally, the ultimate effects are, for the most part, subtly devious and intangible.

COMMON ILLUSTRATIONS OF CULTURE TRANSMISSION THROUGH FAMILY TABLE TALK

1. Much of the family's sense of economic values, and the child's training in them, is indicated in the following sentences that appear repeatedly in the case material in the files of the Carter Foundation.

"Go easy on the butter, it's fifty cents a pound."

"Eggs are sixty cents a dozen now."

⁹ Holmes, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

"Bill's shoes have to be soled."

"What, again? Why I just paid two dollars for soles three weeks ago."

"I think you ought to be ashamed to waste bread when thousands of Chinese children are starving."

"Mother, Mary soiled her new dress."

"Well, she had better take care of it. We can't buy another until after Christmas."

It is lack of the absorption of values of this kind, so constant in normal family life, which constitutes such a big gap in the training of the child reared in an institution.

2. Political attitudes crystallize early in children's minds as a by-product of table conversations such as the following.

Bill. Mother, Jack made \$1.05 playing the machine down at Louey's store.

Mother. Jack had better get a job after school instead of playing the machines.

Father. Well, Jack comes by that honestly. His old man is a gambler if there ever was one.

Older Sister. There must be money in it. I saw Mrs. Haggerty (Jackie's mother) and she had one of those new fur coats on.

Mother. Why don't they raid Louey's place? I saw in the paper about some judge saying they (the machines) were illegal.

Father. Guess the police are fixed.

(Bill looks at his father, apparently not wholly clear on what was implied.)

Mother. Bill, that shirt has got to go into the wash.

Father. Hank O'Brien was telling me yesterday that the police "take" on these machines ran into thousands of dollars a week. He said the lieutenant drove a Cadillac coupe to work, but parked it two blocks away from the station house.

Light seemed to dawn on Bill as he finished his dessert. The boy next door entered the house and Bill rushed from the table.

3. The multiple implications, for a child, of what may seem to the parents merely a routine conversation appears from the following.

Father. Well, I'm sorry, but I forgot to bring home some whiskey for the cocktails tomorrow night.

Mother. It's all right, I don't think we better serve cocktails.

Father. How come?

Mother. Well, the Pearsons are coming, and you know him.

Son. Is Dr. Pearson coming, mother, is he? Is he, mother?

Mother. Yes he is, and Mrs. Pearson is coming too.

Daughter. Why don't we serve cocktails when Dr. Pearson comes?

Mother. Well, Dr. Pearson is a doctor, and he thinks cocktails aren't good for people. He says too many people have the cocktail habit.

Son. I like Dr. Pearson.

Father. Well, I like him, too. But this means a stupid party. (This to wife.)

Mother. I think I'll serve tomato juice. Do you think that will be all right? The red glasses will look nice on that black tray.

Father. If Pearson doesn't want to drink that's O.K. with me, but I don't see why that should spoil the party for the rest of us.

Mother. Well, I do think out of deference to his views we should have a dry dinner.

Son. I like Dr. Pearson. Is he a good doctor, mother?

This conversation carries these implications for the children: (a) A doctor whom I like does not approve of the social use of alcohol; (b) Father thinks a dry party is dull; (c) Mother sees her obligation as a hostess; (d) a difference of opinion is resolved with deference to a guest, regardless of the wishes of the host and hostess. There is no preaching, no moralizing. All the ideas are transmitted in a matter-of-fact way, incidental to a table conversation, chiefly between the parents, concerning a small dinner party.

SUMMARY

1. It is important to understand the mechanism by which the child is inducted into the life of his family and by the family into the life of the larger society.

2. Part of the family's function in this respect is discharged through formal instruction. This was done more extensively earlier than it is today.

3. The greater part of the family's function is performed through indirection, i.e., through a subtle conditioning process. This can best be studied by means of records of family life recorded in the first person.

4. Transcripts of family table talk are particularly valuable for purposes of scientific study.

5. Family table talk is a form of family interaction, important in the identification of personality roles and the development of personality traits.

6. The culture-transmitting function of the family operates with effectiveness during the family meal.

[illegible]

THE SOCIAL ROLE OF LANGUAGE

176

tion there have developed peculiarities of speech which serve to distinguish them from other groups.

The second function of language is to serve as a vehicle for the transmission and preservation of culture. This statement, so fraught with sociological significance, yet fails to tell the whole story. Language is not just a series of objective symbols for the transmission of ideas; it becomes so indelibly associated with these ideas as to be virtually part of them. To express the content of a culture, words must be developed to identify it, and thus the two from the beginning are inextricably associated with each other. In short, words do not just develop parallel to experience; the two interpenetrate—so much so, that among many peoples there develops a virtual identity of the word and the thing which it represents. This is the basis of the magic of spells. Even in our contemporary culture, the line between the two is not sharply drawn. "It is this constant interplay between language and experience," writes Sapir, "which removes language from the cold status of such purely and simply symbolic systems as mathematical symbols of flag signalling."¹ Language is therefore both part and symbol of a culture, reflecting its essence in such a way that another language cannot serve as a substitute. Just as many aspects of a culture cannot be expressed in another language because no words exist to do so, similarly many words can be understood only by explaining them in their cultural setting. In other words, language and all communication are culturally colored.

One other fact concerning the social role of language should be noted, and that is the priority of its development. Because of the nature of its role, it is obvious that language must be the first aspect of the culture to take form, and that its perfection is a prerequisite to the development of the culture as a whole.

The role of language in the development of the child is similar to that in society, for society and the child are but two aspects of the same thing. Language is the key to the child's participation in group life and his introduction to the prevailing culture. In other words, the acquisition of language is necessary to set into motion the two conditioning factors of social interaction and cultural background which

¹ Edward Sapir, "Language," *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, The Macmillan Company, New York, vol. ix, p. 157. See also in this connection George C. Barker, "The Social Function of Language," *A Review of General Semantics*, Autumn, 1945, pp. 228-234; includes bibliography.

mold the personality of the child. With the child, then, as is the case in societal development, the linguistic acquisition comes first and consequently has a pervasive primary significance.

SELECTED FORMS OF COMMUNICATION

The word language has been used thus far in a very general sense as though it comprehended the whole range of interhuman communication. Literally speaking, this is not true, as the following brief description of the forms of communication that are significant in the early life of the child well reveals.

First, communication is not a human monopoly. Dogs bark, horses neigh, snakes hiss, and birds warble. Many of the sounds made by animals express needs, desires, or emotions. Similarly, infants utilize a variety of vocal signals, such as calls for food, gurgles of delight, or cries of discomfort. Chapin speaks of these as laryngeal cries which constitute a "halfway" or "pre-linguistic" stage of communication.²

Second are what might be called the non-symbolic forms of communication, such as gestures, facial expressions, and the like. In part, these are an aspect of preverbal communication, utilized particularly by parents in their relations with children who have not yet acquired speech habits, and they must be regarded largely as physical expressions of emotions and their accompanying demands. There is, of course, a second aspect to these forms of communication, and that is their recognition as physical accompaniments of speech that serve the double purpose of releasing tension for the speaker and adding an expressive overtone for the listener.³

Most communication between humans, however, takes the form of articulate speech in which there is what Ogden calls "objective reference."⁴ This is a distinctly human achievement, and involves the reduction of experience to familiar terms which come to have general acceptance. This common core of communication symbols constitutes the language of a people, and "phonetic language takes precedence over all other kinds of communicative symbolism, which are by com-

² F. Stuart Chapin, *Cultural Change*, D. Appleton-Century Company, Inc., New York, 1928, pp. 35-36. See also Charles Morris, *Signs, Language and Behavior*, Prentice-Hall, Inc., New York, 1946.

³ Herbert Blumer, "Social Attitudes and Nonsymbolic Interaction," *Journal of Educational Sociology*, May, 1936, pp. 515-523.

⁴ C. K. Ogden, *The Meaning of Psychology*, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1926, p. 150.

parison either substitutive, like writing, or merely supplementary, like the gesture accompanying speech.”⁵

FAMILY MODES OF EXPRESSION

Turning now to the more specific aspect of child development, we can note three additional facts in the child's acquisition of his linguistic culture. First is the existence of a family version of the modes of expression. Early in the history of most societies, the total number of symbols and other forms of communication exceeds the needs and capacities of the average person, so that he comes to select from the common storehouse of social forms in developing his own version. Most students of language point out that there is a common or composite, and an individual or family, version of these socially accepted forms of communication. The former consists of the more or less impersonal mass of symbols which reflect the accumulated experiences of society; the latter, of the selections and modifications of this common storehouse made by the individual or family unit which reflect the accumulated experience of the particular individual or family.

Second is the fact that this family version includes all the various forms of communication. In other words, a family not only selects its own words and gives them their distinctive meanings, but supplements them with its own system of gestures, facial expressions, and even laryngeal cries, as Chapin calls them. Moreover, none of these elements in the family version is simple. For example, Sapir, analyzing speech as a personality trait, identified at least five levels at which this form of expressive behavior develops. In addition to vocabulary, there are voice quality; voice dynamics, such as intonation, rhythm, and speed; pronunciation, where again there is an individual and a social pattern; and style, which is a facet of everyday speech just as it is of literature.⁶ Similar complexities characterize other aspects of the family version.

Third—and this needs particular emphasis—is the fact that the child first learns the family version of the linguistic culture. This means that he comes to know his world first, and for a number of years, through the symbolic tools which the family gives it. In other words, he identifies things and ideas by means of the words which his family supplies, so that the two are interwoven from the start. This, it

⁵ Sapir, *op. cit.*, p. 155.

⁶ Edward Sapir, “Speech as a Personality Trait,” *American Journal of Sociology*, May, 1927, pp. 892–906.

should be noted, is both a facilitating and a limiting process, for words not only enable us to grasp ideas but also limit our conception of them. Thus it happens that while the child is learning from his family the mediums of communication through which he comes to know his world, he is learning, too, the limitations and handicaps inherent in this family version. Plant emphasizes in particular the dangers inherent in these limitations. "Our people," he writes, "have learned to manipulate word and number symbols, rather than to understand the relation of these symbols to reality. Anyone who works much with adolescents knows their inability to use meaningfully the symbols which they have so carefully learned by rote."⁷

The child's acquisition of language has been studied in the past chiefly by psychologists and educators, who were interested primarily in the development of the child's verbal competencies, with particular emphasis upon the stages or age levels with regard to the numbers of words and the length of sentences used.⁸ Our approach here is the

⁷ James Plant, "Adolescents in Wartime," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, November, 1944, p. 5.

⁸ The reader who is interested in this approach should consult, among others, the following references, several of which include extended bibliographies: John E. Anderson, "The Development of Spoken Language," *The 38th Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education*, The Public School Publishing Co., Bloomington, 1939; E. J. Day, "The Development of Language in Twins: I. A Comparison of Twins and Single Children," *Child Development*, March, 1932, pp. 179-199; M. S. Fisher, *Language Patterns of Preschool Children*, Child Development Monographs, Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, 1934; D. McCarthy, "A Comparison of Children's Language in Different Situations and Its Relation to Personality Traits," *Journal of Genetic Psychology*, December, 1929, pp. 583-591; D. McCarthy, "Language Development," in C. Murchison (ed.), *A Handbook of Child Psychology*, Clark University Press, Worcester, rev. ed. 1933, pp. 329-373; D. McCarthy, *Language Development of the Preschool Child*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1930, No. 4; D. Van Alstyne, *The Environment of Three-Year-Old Children: Factors Related to Intelligence and Vocabulary Tests*, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, 1929; H. M. Williams, M. L. McFarland, and M. F. Little, *Development of Language and Vocabulary in Young Children*, University of Iowa Press, Iowa City, 1937; E. J. Day, "The Development of Language in Twins: II. The Development of Twins: Their Resemblance and Differences," *Child Development*, March, 1932, pp. 298-316; Ruth Strang, *An Introduction to Child Study*, The Macmillan Company, New York, rev. ed., 1938; M. E. Smith, *An Investigation of the Development of the Sentence and the Extent of the Vocabulary in Young Children*, University of Iowa Press, Iowa City, 1926; Jean Piaget, *The Language and Thought of the Child*, Harcourt, Brace & Company, Inc., New York, 1926; J. R. Grant, "A Child's Vocabulary and Its Growth," *Pedagogical Seminary*, March, 1915, pp. 183-203; Edith A. Davis, "The Mental and Linguistic Superiority of Only

situational one, in which the chief concern is with the variations in the situations in which the child acquires his expressive behavior. Studies of such family situations, made under the auspices of the William T. Carter Foundation at the University of Pennsylvania, include 51 case records of family modes of expression, and this material is drawn upon heavily in the remainder of this chapter.

INFANT CONDITIONING SITUATIONS

The child's contacts with family modes of expression begin at birth. Particularly important is the mother's response to the child. Observations of the mother's communication behavior with her infant were made in sixteen cases, all of them during the first ten months of the child's life. The observed behavior of the mothers revealed three distinct communication patterns. The first was one chiefly of sounds. This type of mother for the most part coos, gurgles, laughs, talks, and makes other sounds to her baby. Her behavior, as she bathes or "changes" or feeds the infant, is of an outgoing, verbal kind. In the second pattern, the mother's communication behavior is much more one of facial expressions. She catches the child's eye, smiles, frowns, or makes grimaces of one kind or another. There are verbal accompaniments, to be sure; the difference in this respect between the first and second type of mother is wholly one of degree. In the third type, the mother is predominantly active and intent. The face is relatively immobile, action is swift and efficient, and there are fewer sound accompaniments as a rule.

Such are the differences in the earliest situations of expression in which infants find themselves. It is interesting to speculate on the significance of these first conditioning influences. This, however, falls more properly within the province of the psychiatrist; we merely report in the briefest form these first family modes of expression as evidenced in the mothers' linguistic or communication behavior. Our findings here, based on a small number of cases, are presented as highly tentative, and for suggestive purposes only.

Recently Dr. Leo Kanner, child psychiatrist, reported on an unusual type of mental illness affecting children of intelligent parents which may have some relation to the observations just presented. These young

Girls," *Child Development*, June, 1937, pp. 139-143; Paul H. Furfey, "The Sociological Implications of Substandard English," *American Catholic Sociological Review*, March, 1944.

patients, nearly half of whom come from families represented in *Who's Who* or *American Men of Science*, or both, seem to live in a strange world of their own, completely without people. Hands that dress and care for them are just hands—objects not belonging to any person. Dr. Kanner raises the question as to whether the gifts of the parents might not have actually contributed to the illness of their children. For the most part, the members of these families are strongly preoccupied with abstractions of a scientific, literary, or artistic nature and are limited with regard to genuine interest in people.⁹ This, it is obvious, would particularly characterize the treatment of the young infant.

PREVERBAL EXPRESSION IN THE FAMILY

Another point to be emphasized is the importance, in the young child's development, of preverbal forms of expression within the family. A good deal of the earliest communication from adult to child consists of facial expressions—smiles, grimaces, frowns, etc.—with some sound accompaniment at times. Until the child has acquired some words, communication with adults must be achieved in this way. Not only moods but ideas and commands are thus transmitted. The parent frowns and utters sharp, staccato sounds; or the mother smiles or gurgles, and food follows. These differing sights and sounds come to define behavior for the child before words are understood. Moreover, this mode of expression is retained after words are used. The child observes the facial expressions of his parents for some years and associates pleasure, anger, happiness, irritation, or annoyance with them. He learns, too, that these are often advance notices of more aggressive behavior on the part of the parent.

It is doubtful whether the role of facial modes of family expression for the child has been recognized adequately in the study of human behavior. Two of its implications seem particularly important. One is the fact that the child's earliest impressions of the parents are those of visual memory. This suggests that the parent has a "facial personality," and that this is the first personality which the child comes to know. A second implication is that these facial expressions and the accompanying sounds are chiefly expressive forms of emotions. Here, in other words, are to be found early conditioning factors in the child's emo-

⁹ Leo Kanner, "Unaware of Others," *Science News Letter*, August 11, 1945, p. 92.

tional development, as well as the basis of the emotional accompaniment with conversation. Studies in the beginnings of gesture patterns might be made appropriately at this point.

THE RANGE OF FAMILY SEMANTIC SITUATIONS

From the time the child learns his first word until he learns to read, the acquisition of words is by ear, i.e., by hearing the spoken word. This period covers about six years, and for children who show only slight interest in reading it remains the predominant one. During this period the family is the chief group in which the child acquires words, its relative importance depending upon the extent to which his contacts during the preschool period are confined to the family group. Transcripts of table talk for thirty-five families in which there were children, gathered through the facilities of the William T. Carter Foundation, permit certain tentative generalizations concerning family linguistic situations. They are presented here in summary form.

1. The amount of conversation per family per unit of time varies tremendously. At one extreme are several families who had almost no talk during a forty-minute dinner. There are long spells of silence. The air is one of marked restraint and formality. Conversation is confined almost wholly to requests for food. The parents are described as "tight-lipped" adults. At the other extreme are records of continuous table talk, often with several members of the family talking at the same time. In other words, the amount of talk to which a child is exposed within the family group varies tremendously.

2. There is a marked difference in the extent of the vocabulary used in the table talk of families. Some families use a very limited number of different words; others reveal what is commonly referred to as an excellent command of language, i.e., they utilize a wide variety of words. To a considerable extent, these differences coincide with variations in the subject matter. Many family conversations are confined largely to trite, routine matters, or to personal and kinship affairs. The language here tends to be as drab and limited as the topics discussed. In varying degrees of contrast are the family conversations which cover many subjects. In table talk records that are equal in the total number of words recorded, there are differences of more than 800 per cent in the number of different words used.

3. The process of acquiring a vocabulary is twofold. One involves the learning of new words; the other, the association of meaning with

them. Since words do not have a single correct meaning but have what Hayakawa calls "areas of meaning,"¹⁰ the family's role in identifying the meaning of words for children during this early period is particularly important. A careful reading of the case material reveals considerable differences in the meaning given to the same words in different families. Some of these differences have to do with shades of meaning; others are so obviously incorrect that they reveal only the family's ignorance.

There are, however, other factors than knowledge and ignorance. Our material reveals highly significant family attitudes toward words and their meaning. In one of these families, with two children aged seven and nine years, there is a continuing attempt on the part of the parents to enlarge the children's semantic grasp. In the course of the family conversation, the children are asked if they understand the words used, or they interrupt to ask, for example, "Daddy, what does emphasize mean?" Both the father and the mother in this family leave the dinner table to consult the dictionary, with a statement like: "Well, we might as well find out now." In contrast, there is the family where John, aged thirteen, used the word preference, only to have his father curse him and say, "Preference, Preference, I'll Preference you. You with your fancy words. You can't highhat me as long as I pay the bills." Then there is the family in which the child said, "I don't know what that means," to which the parent replied, "If I get the razor strap, you'll understand what I'm saying."

One particular aspect of this family interpretation of words calls for special comment. The child gets from the family not only the meaning of words, but also often a meaning charged with emotion. One semanticist refers to these as *loaded*¹¹ words. They are words that carry emotions as well as ideas, such as dago, kike, hunkie, louse, crackpot, etc. And there are the words which families use to epitomize a set of conceptions or evaluations and which, transmitted to the child, become barriers to shield them from reality. Capitalism is synonymous with exploitation; communist means a wild-eyed, unreasonable person; a fascist is a person who disagrees with you; politics explains any public or semi-public miscarriages of your ideas of fair play.

4. Family semantic situations vary on the basis of the role permitted

¹⁰ S. I. Hayakawa, *Language in Action*, Harcourt, Brace & Company, Inc., New York, 1939, p. 71.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

to the child. Roughly speaking, families fall into two main types in this respect, differing from each other in degree. There are the child-centered and the adult-centered table conversations. In the former, the child or children dominate the conversation, or it centers around them. Adults direct the talk toward the children, toward subjects that interest them, and seek to stimulate their participation in the conversation. In contrast are the family conversations that tend characteristically to be adult-centered. Here subjects of adult interest only are discussed, child participation is ridiculed or dismissed as incidental prattle, or the children are admonished to "be quiet and let your elders speak." Differences of this kind presumably have a great deal to do with a child's acquisition of the linguistic culture.

5. One cannot but notice variations in the child's participation in the family table talk on the basis of interruptions by other members of the family group. Family life records show that some children are seldom allowed to finish a sentence. In some families this happens because another person, most often the mother, interrupts to say what the child is trying to say. In other cases, the child's attempts are lost in the general welter of the family's words. In one of these families, a six-year-old girl was not once allowed to finish a sentence without interruption or verbal help. It is pertinent to raise the question of the relationship of such situations to stammering and other speech defects in the child. Certain kinds of stammer, for example, might well be regarded as a mechanism for holding the floor, conversationally speaking, and having time to think and formulate words. Even savants do this at times, when momentarily at a loss for words.

6. A careful study of family conversations reveals that the mother is the most important factor in the transmission of the child's linguistic culture. This is most apparent when family conversation records other than table talk are considered. In many families, particularly in the lower-income groups where she prepares and serves the meal, the mother often comes to the table after the others are seated, and she may leave it several times during a meal. Records of family table talk in such cases fail to do justice to her importance, especially with the younger children. Considering the situation as a whole in normal homes where the mother devotes herself largely or wholly to the job of homemaker, she converses more with the young child than anyone else. This relative importance of the mother in the child's major scholastic attainment, i.e., learning a language, has never been fully

assessed. One aspect of it will be discussed in the next chapter. The significance, at home, of the role of the mother who is gainfully employed many hours a day also needs to be examined.

The semantic situations which prevail in different families are presented here as of basic importance in the child's linguistic development. The number of words that a child can use, and use in their accepted meaning, determines in large measure his school progress, especially in the earlier years, and this initial success or failure speedily becomes cumulative in its effects. Again, there are those psychologists who emphasize the role of word equipment in intelligence measurement scores. This again would be particularly true in the earlier years. Finally, words are the mediums through which the child learns about his world. They are avenues by which the world we do not see comes to us. We interpret these reports on the basis of what the words in them mean to us. To the extent that our grasp of words is inadequate, our interpretation of this world is incorrect or incomplete. Moreover, this matter of interpretation is of much greater importance today than it used to be. The colonial child, and adult, could function satisfactorily with much more limited semantic equipment. Today, by contrast, we live in a global setting, mostly in areas of dense population, and with means of communication which deluge us with words. Our lives are filled with words, and to live satisfactorily we must know many words and be able to use them within the framework of social acceptance. Words are therefore a mechanism of social adjustment.

LEVELS OF LANGUAGE

Students of language often speak of language levels, using the term to indicate that language takes different forms at varying levels or strata in the larger society. Four such sets of language levels may be identified in the records of family conversations.

One of these results from an age-graded use of words in families in which there are children. At least three age levels can easily be distinguished. The first one tends to prevail when the children are quite young; much of the family conversation is at the "baby-talk" level. Later there develops a layer which extends up to the eleventh or twelfth year. During this period, the words customarily used in family conversation, especially by the children, are relatively simple, and are of the kind that seem most easily learned by ear. Still later, as the children progress in school and acquire many words through outside

contacts, a third or youth level is obtained. In families where there are no children, another or wholly adult level can be identified.

Two problems suggest themselves in a further analysis of these age levels. One of these concerns the younger children. Such children tend to be ignored in these changes. The family seems to adjust its age level to the older children and to ignore the younger ones, especially if the age differential is not large. Questions about word meanings asked by the younger children are given less consideration, even in our most intelligent families. Apparently this is another example of how family situations differ for individual children in the same family.

A second problem implicit in this material grows out of the differences in children in their capacity to learn by ear. The child's acquisition of words by means of these recurring family conversations is wholly by ear. Some children's apprehension of words is visual: they must see what they hear; in others it is auricular: like Santayana, they must hear what they read.¹² What this means is that children who acquire new words by sight are generally handicapped during this period. One cannot but reflect, too, on the significance of this difference in the many lands and during the long years in which almost all learning took place by ear.

A second set of language levels is based on sex differences. There is a sex-appropriate language for boys and one for girls. The recorded conversations of all the families in which there are children bear witness to these differences and to the family's consciousness of them. "Little girls do not talk that way." "A lady never raises her voice." "He sounds like a boy all right." "Her voice will be a great asset to her." This sex distinction is evident at every turn—in the words used, habits of exclamation, intensity of expression, and stock phrases, as well as the subjects discussed. The child learns early and is reminded constantly that there is prestige in learning the sex-appropriate forms of expression.

The third set of language levels is based on the quality of expression as determined by social usage. It is in this sense that professional students of language usually speak of levels of language, and three such levels are customarily identified. The first is *informal English*, which is most generally encountered in the ordinary life of people of good social standing. "It is the typical language of an educated person going about his everyday business." The second is *formal English*, which is informal

¹² George Santayana, *Persons and Places*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1944, p. 156.

English "refined, tidied up," and "shorn of its looseness"; it partakes more of the written language of educated writers. Here one says "presently" instead of "soon," "prematurely" for "too soon," and "it is to be regretted" instead of "it's too bad." Finally, there is *vulgate English*, the everyday speech of less educated people, bristling with "vulgar" words and "bad grammar": "I ain't got none." "I seen it." "You'll see it wrote on the door."¹⁸

While the main distinctions between these types are quite clear, there exist marked variations from one family to another. There are children in families whose recorded conversation contains few grammatically correct sentences; at the other extreme are the families in which the parents are meticulous regarding the children's good English. These differences are a matter not only of the intelligence and verbal equipment of the parents, but also of their consciousness of and attitude toward the problem. Because of a certain informality that characterizes much of our life today, and the contact between children of all classes in the public-school system, many children in language-conscious families bring into their homes the vulgate language of their associates. Some of the comic strips do likewise, and, with the prestige of the printed word. The case is similar in regard to slang, which may be regarded as a variety of the vulgate language that grows out of a desire for novelty or vivid emphasis. In our so-called better homes, there are constant efforts in family talk to correct or restrain these lapses. Although the number of our cases does not warrant a generalization, it appears that the higher the family's social level the more standardized its conversation will be at the level of informal or formal language.

Again one cannot but speculate on the significance of these language levels for the child's school progress. The schools use a relatively formalized type of English. The complex ideas and dignified subjects taught necessitate the use of this type; hence the schools naturally lay great emphasis upon proper linguistic behavior. Our records clearly identify the children who are reared in homes in which the language of the school is used, so that no linguistic difference or effort is involved in passing from one to the other. Similarly, one sees the handi-

¹⁸ Leonard Bloomfield, *Language*, Henry Holt & Company, Inc., New York, rev. ed., 1940; Porter G. Perrin, *Writer's Guide and Index to English*, Scott, Foresman & Company, Chicago, 1942; H. L. Mencken, *The American Language*, A. A. Knopf, New York, 4th ed., 1936; Leonard Bloomfield, "Literature and Illiterate Speech," *American Speech*, 1927, pp. 432-439.

cap of the child, especially the younger child, who is reared in a family that uses vulgate English and who must constantly pass back and forth from one level to the other in school and at home. Many of these children live a kind of linguistic double life during their school years which cannot but be a handicap to their school progress. Subsequently many of them take jobs where vulgate English will suffice and where any other kind would be conspicuous. How stable the family form of speech may be is indicated by the question of one high-school senior to another: "Is ya done y're Greek yet?"

LANGUAGE AS A SOCIAL INDEX

The more one reads records of family talk, the more he sees language as an index of family social characteristics. Four aspects illustrative of the use of family language as a social index will be presented briefly.

Occupation.

Many occupational groups develop distinctive forms of expression. Some of these consist of "shop talk," which includes the lingo of the job, from psychiatry to panhandling; some are figures of speech suggested by the occupational experience. To the extent that an occupational group is isolated from other folks, its members come to use clearly marked varieties of speech. Thus, seafaring men speak their own type of non-standard English; the hobo has his own speech forms; so do circus people, soldiers in fox-holes, and professors who live in ivory towers.

Our records of family conversations are replete with illustrations of the role of the occupational background. This influence may be direct, i.e., through shop talk at home; it may determine the general or non-occupational topics talked about; or it may dictate the imagery used. People naturally draw on their daily experience for the grist for their conversational mill. Moreover, our limited number of cases suggests that the role of such experience is greater at the lower occupational levels. The professional and executive types of families, many of whom live in suburban communities, make an apparently conscious effort to draw a line, as it were, between the job (office, plant, shop, etc.) and the home. Some parents pride themselves on not "bringing the office" into their family life. In such cases there is less infusion of occupational terminology than there would otherwise be.

Religion.

It is rather surprising to find the number and variety of religion-identifying references in family conversation records. These are clearest in Roman Catholic and Jewish families. References are either direct, or in the imagery employed, or by implication. Religious holidays, religious observations in everyday life, and relations to other cultural groups are alluded to frequently. In two of our cases words are used that obviously have some religious implication but are meaningless to us. Requests for explanation are evaded. We are reminded here of Bloomfield's observation: "If the special (religious) group is at odds with the rest of the community, it may use its peculiarities of speech as a secret dialect, as do the English-speaking gypsies."¹⁴

Geographical Area.

Linguistic diversities based on geographical sections have long been emphasized by students of language. Although most clearly revealed in audible speech, they appear also in written form in the use of identifying words and expressions. Even a person with an excellent mastery of the common language will keep some feature of the "dialect" of his place of origin and "with a certain coquetry flaunt" it before us. However, Jespersen contends that, generally speaking, the more commonplace a person is, the more will his language bear the stamp of the community in which he lives. Obviously, this will also hold true of the family unit.¹⁵ These geographical speech marks appear repeatedly in our records. The family that uses a "lift" and listens to the "wireless" is obviously British. The thirteen-year-old miss who "is fixing to go" with "you-all" is manifestly not from Vermont. "The potatoes are all" identifies the up-state Pennsylvania German. The family who drives to "the end of the cement" came a year ago from the mountainous West. Words and phrases bearing the mark of geographical origin are on almost every page of this material.

Social Class.

The phrase social class is used to denote general social status as indicated by plane of living, educational attainment, occupational status,

¹⁴ Bloomfield, *Language*, p. 49.

¹⁵ Otto Jespersen, *Language: Its Nature, Origin, and Development*, G. Allen and Unwin, London, 1922, pp. 75, 204.

and certain additional cultural attainments. Thus conceived, social class is the most striking line of cleavage in our language records. First are the distinctions in the words commonly used. At one level you go to "tea." You "eat supper" in some homes; in others you "are at dinner." At one level, you say, "Oh, I say"; at another you hear "Cheez" every fourth word. A girl may be a "goil," a "moll," a "cutie," a "lassie," or "Miss Helen." In different circles you are invited to "have one," to "have a skittle of suds," or to have a "shot on the run," or a "Scotch and soda."

Again, social classes differ markedly in the use of imagery in conversation, that is, in the degree to which figurative expressions are used. Families at the lower social levels seem much more figurative in their language, less rational, and less logical than other people. Our conclusions here are highly tentative, and reflect chiefly an impression.

We are on somewhat firmer ground with this case material in pointing out a certain class difference in the use of words. Families in the lower social classes show a tendency to slur words, to run them together, so that the combination of words and sounds comes to be the important thing. These families also tend toward the removal of irregularities in language, a process often referred to by language students as leveling. In families in the higher social strata, particularly among intellectual persons, every word tends to be used more in an individual sense. Sentences consist of individual units. They can be taken apart, put together again, and combined in different ways. The distinctions and subtleties in language are emphasized. In other words, as students of language put it, humble folk create language, but the upper classes of language put it, humble folk create language, but the upper classes develop, refine, and systematize it.¹⁶

Language obviously is a peculiarly revealing form of behavior. It identifies a person more effectively than almost any other form, because it is the result of slow accretion over long periods of time. In its existing version it is the combination of habits that are so deeply ingrained and so unconscious a form of expression as to permit of little consistent dissembling. Language habits not only are singularly persistent; they also reveal life's past content. Language is the verbal aspect of personality, announcing its source and history with every word. Language is behavior; speech, its vocal declaration.

¹⁶ Further references to class differences in language will be made in chap. 13, "The Child and the Class Status."

FAMILY LINGUISTIC SYSTEMS

Reference to the social determinants of language must not blind us to the fact, so clearly brought out in these studies, that each family has its own linguistic system. The conclusions that follow are based not only on records of conversations but on a large number of supplementary interviews.

1. Each family has its own word peculiarities. These may be words or expressions in common use but with a distinctive family meaning or form, peculiar turns of expression, or words which are not used elsewhere and have meaning only for the family. Karen G., who has an M.A. degree and teaches English in the high school, still says "across^t" for "across," as does her entire family. Ruth always says "replentish" for "replenish," as did her mother and her grandmother. The Powers family used the word "copistatic" which means to them only: "Well, everything went well today." The Turners use: "We must have gotten that with cigarette coupons," to mean: "I can't understand how that damned thing got into this house (or room, or box)." In other words, each family has a kind of shorthand or dialect which often serves far more effectively than ordinary words to convey meaning, to give praise, or to apply the verbal lash. These word peculiarities are a product of the family history and derive their distinctive meaning from this fact.

2. Each family has its own terms for certain aspects of its life. The most obvious illustrations are the words or phrases that have to do with certain parts of the body, toilet habits, and toilet accessories. As a rule, a family develops these when the children are quite young, and they are retained as a matter of habit. But the list of instances which we have found are far more extensive. They have to do with going out at night, sleeping late on Sunday morning, family chores, social obligations, and many other aspects of life. Several of our families insist that much of this family terminology, especially that dealing with more intimate matters, needs to be studied on the basis of age levels; i.e., children have their own words which they communicate to each other at certain age levels just as adults have their words when they discuss these matters, and this age division coincides with parent-child groupings.¹⁷

3. Each family has its word taboos or word avoidances. In part, these

¹⁷ For an interesting case of age (i.e., parent-child) distinction, see Jerre Mangione, *Mount Allegro*, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1942, pp. 54-55.

are reflections of the social patterns, and include words pertaining to certain parts of the body and to certain of its functions; there are also religious taboos upon taking in vain the names of those worshiped or revered; even the names of certain animals may be taboo, usually because of their application to individuals. Among the latter, our families identified such words as bitch, snake, wolf, etc.

Within the social pattern is the family pattern of word taboos. Our material emphasizes that these vary a great deal from one family to another, often with no consistency or underlying principle. One family speaks frankly about sex but strictly avoids religious words and names. A family that is openly and habitually profane punishes a younger member for the inadvertent use of the word "whore." Any reference to bowel movements is labeled as distinctly in bad taste by several of our families who are not otherwise conspicuous for the "cleanliness" of their conversation. The word bitch is used normally by Philadelphia suburban families engaged in dog breeding. Another family permits no reference to alcoholic drinks or habits in any form. An adolescent in one family knew only the word rum. Beer was rum; whiskey was rum; wine was rum. And one drop of rum defiled. Finally, we cannot avoid mentioning the family in which the word grandmother was taboo. In this case, the husband's mother was a tall, statuesque blonde who was not at all willing to be thus reminded that her "salad" days had passed.

It is our observation that a large part of a family's distinctive pattern of word taboos is based on the aversions of the adults or on the marked prejudices of some one member of the family, so that the taboo is maintained as a matter of deference. A family does not use words as a rule which remind its members of things they do not want to think about. These omissions are significant, then, in that they identify the family avoidances, based chiefly on the past experiences, or lack of experiences, of its adult members. They are usually deeply embedded and show strong emotional association.

Lengthy interviews with a number of families whose modes of expression were studied seem to warrant the following conclusions regarding these taboos. First, the word taboos which prevail in families are an important factor in determining the reaction of the members of the family to other people. We think that persons who violate these taboos are crude, uncouth, ill mannered. Or, at least, their violation arrests our attention in a less than favorable way. Second, children

learn these taboos quite early, and by the time adolescence is reached they have become firmly fixed. Our families report various school difficulties growing out of the fact that children from different families observe varying word taboos, and teachers with still other taboo patterns become involved. Third, there arise problems of adjustment between persons who establish intimate and continuing relationships with each other, as in marriage, on the basis of their respective word taboos. "Rapport," one matron pointed out in the course of this study, "is verbal in part. These word taboos are much more important than behavior taboos, because so large a part of our social relationships is verbal." Finally, one is impressed by the fact that word taboos mean subject avoidances. This in turn results in areas of ignorance, at least as far as family instruction or insight is concerned. Betty Smith, the novelist, has reminded us recently that when children ask questions about sex the parents do not know how to answer them because they do not have the words, mutually known and understood, to do so.¹⁸ The program of sex education might well begin with some concern with family modes of expression.

The study of family word taboos leaves one with a profound conviction of the importance of language as a social discipline and culture-transmitting device. Through the processes of word selection and word reaction, the family does much to introduce the child to the social, and, of course, the family, code. This substantiates the conclusions of Groves when he says: "Conventions are in large measure built into the child as attitudes toward words. Some are unseemly, and as a result emotional reactions similar to primitive taboos get tied to certain acts and ideas. Other words are encouraged, and the approval helps establish a favorable disposition toward a different set of behavior and thoughts. Much of this language fellowship of child and parent is carried on without self-consciousness."¹⁹

FAMILY PATTERNS OF CONVERSATION

In reviewing the material on family conversations, one is impressed by the fact that most families show a specific totality or pattern which is characteristic of that particular family. These are spoken of here as

¹⁸ Betty Smith, *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1943, p. 223. See also, Cyril Bibby, *Sex Education: A Guide for Parents, Teachers, and Youth Leaders*, Emerson Books, Inc., New York, 1946.

¹⁹ Ernest R. Groves, *The Family and Its Social Functions*, J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia, 1940, p. 152.

family patterns of conversation, and although a phase of family linguistic systems they are reserved for separate comment. Summary types or classifications, based on a total of 82 cases, are presented briefly.

1. Family conversations may be subjective or objective. By the former are meant those cases in which the conversations are family-centered. That is, the family talks chiefly about itself, its experiences, its achievements, its misfortunes, and its problems. In contrast are those families in which the talk centers largely upon matters outside the family. This group may be divided into two subgroups: (a) those who talk chiefly about other people—friends, enemies, relatives, business or work associates, or public personages; and (b) those who talk about objects—airplanes, tanks, automobiles, books, trucks, and the like.

2. Family conversations may be summarized as analytical or evaluating. The first type consists of conversations in which the general approach is the analysis of a person, object, or event. There are description, analysis, and interpretation. The emphasis is chiefly upon telling about the subject at hand. The contrasting type is concerned with judgment; motives are imputed, purposes and results are evaluated. The conclusions are chiefly (in this study) critical, depreciatory, and denunciatory. These are the families that are "always talking about somebody." In some of the families studied, whose social ambitions were strong, the overwhelming part of the conversation is devoted to the depreciation of the social clique or group they hope to enter.

3. A rather distinctive type of family conversation is the sharp, rapier-like kind. Here the emphasis is upon sharpness and brilliance of execution. It may take the form of making wisecracks, being smart-alecky, or being keenly clever. In any event, the main consideration is fast, sparkling, adroit expression. Further varieties within this type may be identified. In some cases, statements are made as if to attract attention primarily to the speaker. Talk is a kind of exhibitionism or showmanship. It is as though the speaker sought to give a clever performance rather than attempted to convey a thought. He is interested in juggling deftly, no matter whether the balls he juggles are of tinsel or of gold. In some cases there is a sadistic performance. Sometimes a habitual phrase is clearly indicative of a sadistic intent. For example, one adult in the study habitually used the phrase, "So I stuck my knife in there and turned it around to see how they would squirm," to indicate his participation in a discussion. The main purpose is ap-

parently to hurt. Here one finds the cutting speech, the stinging remark. You say something to put someone in his place. In the case of three persons included in this study, more than nine out of every ten remarks recorded for them were of this kind.

4. Family patterns of conversation vary greatly in regard to their general tonal quality. At one extreme are conversations which abound with "snarl words," and much of the talk consists of spasmodically throwing verbal bites at each other as one throws sticks at a dog. There are loud noises, yelling, wrangling, constant interruptions, so that the whole performance partakes of the nature of static on the radio. At the other extreme are the family conversations which suggest, by way of contrast, the Sunday afternoon symphony. A quiet and polite exchange of ideas goes on, "purr words" dominate, there is politeness and consideration when disagreement arises. People are allowed to finish a sentence. Even the children are accorded these courtesies.

5. The topics of conversation in these 82 families show a rich variety, but the topics discussed by any one family seem as a rule rather limited. In other words, most families talk habitually about a few things. One cannot escape the conviction that the range is determined not so much by the intellectual capacities of the persons involved as by their predilections. For example, some of the highly intelligent families devote their conversational prowess to a very limited number of topics which are discussed both *ad infinitum* and *ad nauseam*. Some families, for example, talk constantly about the neighbors' children; others, about the boss; others, about the movies. It is interesting to note to what extent certain topics of conversation become a matter of habit, a fact which has great meaning for the child and his induction into the culture.

When one notes these and other characteristics of family conversations, he cannot but be impressed with the distinctness of the pattern in any individual family. Family conversation is, from one point of view, a series of habits—in the things that are talked about, how they are discussed, the attitudes which prevail, the kinds of words that are used, and the degree of conversational etiquette reciprocally accorded.

SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF SPEECH

Language is above all a matter of sound. Through the long ages of man's past, most people were illiterate, and to them language was

exclusively a vocal form of expression. Today, the recorded form of language is used increasingly; nevertheless, the most frequently used form remains the spoken word. Although this study was concerned chiefly with written records of family conversations, some notes were made regarding certain characteristics of speech which seemed of importance to the child and his induction into the culture.²⁰

Pronunciation.

Through commonly accepted usage and standard works of reference, society establishes certain forms of word pronunciation. Departures from these accepted forms, more than those due to individual variations in voice timbre, serve to attract attention. These have been noted in this study. They occur constantly, and with marked frequency in certain families. Some of the errors recorded are slight, so that the meaning is still clear; in other cases, families use words which leave one wholly at a loss to understand what is meant. Further observations suggest two conclusions. First, families in which the adults aspire to better speech (and to a higher social position) offend frequently in this respect. Apparently, they see words in print and make an effort to use them; and since they have not been learned by ear, they are mispronounced. The self-educated are particularly apt to mispronounce words. Second, one notes repeatedly a sensitiveness to having one's pronunciation corrected. These records reveal several cases of considerable tension between members of families that resulted from attempted corrections.

Considering the mispronunciations noted as a whole, we are impressed with two further facts. First is their significance for children in their educational progress, particularly in its early stages before the school can reorient the use of vocabulary; the second is the significance of these word mistakes in social relationships. Consistent or conspicuous mispronunciation of words identifies the speaker as ignorant or uncouth, or results in his being misunderstood or misunderstanding others. The old saying, "She looked like a lady until she opened her mouth," is at least partially applicable here. The relationship between security in word pronunciation and a sense of personality security is for the psychiatrist to determine.

²⁰ See Edward Sapir, "Speech as a Personality Trait," pp. 892-906, for reference to such characteristics.

Accent.

There is a stress or increased force given to certain syllables in speaking which, together with certain habits of pronunciation, is spoken of here as accent. This is an easily noticeable characteristic of speech in those whose accents differ from that of the observer. Methods for its scientific recording and analysis are rather undeveloped. Although a number of observations were made, the conclusions presented here are highly tentative. It appears that accent is largely a matter of geographical or national origin and of social and educational status, and to a lesser extent a family and individual product. One is particularly impressed by the fact that, in the heterogeneous life of America, with its diverse nationality and linguistic groups, accent is peculiarly indicative of social type. This latter phrase is used to mean the constructs which the group arrives at by selecting and abstracting accentuated forms of conduct displayed by some of its members and having specific connotations in terms of interests, concerns, and dispositions of the group.²¹

Gestures.

This term is used here to mean bodily accompaniments of speech used for purposes of emphasis or explanation. Gestures accompany all speech; in kind and amount they differ with the individual speaker, but to a large extent they are governed by social convention. Students have regarded gesture generally as a culturally patterned development, i.e., certain gestures characterize entire groups. Thus Child reports, "Gestures are an important part of the Italian's equipment for communication. They are used a great deal as an accessory to ordinary conversation, especially when speech is excited or emphatic. There are also a number of special gestures which convey a specific meaning by themselves."²² In our civilization, people of the privileged class gesticulate least.

Observations made in the course of this study suggest that there is also a family pattern of gestures. Our notes indicate repeated instances of some habitual distinctive use of the hands or body by several members of the same family. These similarities occur generally between parent and child and at times are so identical as to be almost uncanny.

²¹ Samuel Strong, "Social Types in a Minority Group," *American Journal of Sociology*, March, 1943, pp. 563-573.

²² Irvin L. Child, *Italian or American?* Yale University Press, New Haven, 1943, pp. 22-23.

The use of gestures strikes one in particular as a kind of barometer of nervous output in conversation. Gestures are accompanied usually by a heightened or intensified expression of energy. This multiple form of expression, with its increased demands upon nervous energy, would seem to be of great significance in relation to the other forms of expenditure of energy by the individual.

SUMMARY

1. Language is a distinct form of culture and needs to be considered separately as such.

2. Language is a mechanism or medium for social interaction and for the transmission of all forms of culture. It is a symbolic technique enabling communication between individuals.

3. Modes of expression constitute a distinctive aspect of family situations. Each family has its own words, signs, gestures, pet phrases, humorous references, special words of condemnation, favorite topics, and characteristic forms of expression.

4. Language is behavior, much like manners or dress, whose standards and requirements vary on the basis of class, origin, occupation, activities, and the like.

5. Language, learned early and constantly associated with every other aspect of culture, comes in a peculiar way to serve as a symbol of home, family, class, state, status, and country. This explains why, as Lowie puts it, "Nowhere is the difference between tweedledum and tweedledee a more powerful barrier than in language." Students of behavior, and of international relations, will do well to remember this.

The Bilingual Child

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Bilingualism, or the use of two languages by the same person, is both a very old and a very common phenomenon, existing wherever relationships develop between peoples who speak different languages. The definite form which it takes, however, and the social implications that result, vary a great deal from one country to another; in the United States it emerges as an aftermath of immigration, with the resultant presence of minority groups who, for several generations at least, continue to use their traditional language. As a result, the children learn first the family language, and then later, the use of English. This makes the problem of bilingualism in the United States essentially a phase of the personality development of children, and to it the present chapter is devoted. Attention is directed, first, to the data on bilingualism; second, to a brief summary of the present emphases and current conclusions in the literature on the bilingual child; and, third, to the problems of the bilingual as a person. This last part is based on a study of original case material.

### DATA ON BILINGUALISM IN THE UNITED STATES

Almost one out of every five white persons in the United States grew up in a home in which some language other than English was the principal one spoken during the years of earliest childhood. A total of 21,996,240 such persons are revealed by the U. S. Census report, *Mother Tongue*, for 1940. This is equal to 18.6 per cent of our total white population, to 19.1 per cent of the white population who reported mother tongue statistics, and to 16.7 per cent of our total population in 1940. Since the overwhelming proportion of these individuals also learned to speak English and use it to some extent, the foregoing data serve to identify the approximate extent of bilingualism in the

United States. It will be obvious at once that some of the persons included can speak more than two languages; hence the term bilingual is not wholly correct. In most cases, however, it is sufficiently accurate to warrant its use for purposes of ordinary discussion.

There are eight linguistic groups which account for 17,646,600, or 80.2 per cent, of all those whose mother tongue was other than English. Table 1 presents these groups, the total for each group, and the percentage this constitutes of the total white population.

TABLE 1. Major Linguistic Groups, by Totals, and Percentage of Total White Population

| LINGUISTIC<br>GROUP | TOTAL<br>NUMBER | PERCENTAGE OF<br>TOTAL WHITE<br>POPULATION |
|---------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------------|
| German              | 4,949,780       | 4.2                                        |
| Italian             | 3,766,820       | 3.2                                        |
| Polish              | 2,416,320       | 2.0                                        |
| Spanish             | 1,861,400       | 1.6                                        |
| Yiddish             | 1,751,100       | 1.5                                        |
| French              | 1,412,060       | 1.2                                        |
| Swedish             | 830,900         | 0.7                                        |
| Norwegian           | 658,220         | 0.6                                        |
| Total               | 17,646,600      | 15.0                                       |

The 1940 enumeration of mother tongue statistics is unique in that it includes not only persons of foreign white stock but also native-born whites of native-born white parentage. This complete nativity classification throws some light on the fact of cultural, and particularly linguistic, persistence. Of the 21,996,240 individuals reported as reared in other than English-speaking homes, 8,354,700 were foreign. This is 38 per cent of the total bilingual, and 75.2 per cent of the foreign-born, population. Another 10,712,480 were native-born of foreign or mixed parents; this is 48.7 per cent of the bilinguals and 46.3 per cent of this nativity class. Finally, 2,929,060 were native-born whites of native-born white parentage. This is 13.3 per cent of the bilinguals and 3.5 per cent of this nativity class in the population. These last data are particularly significant as evidence of cultural persistence, as is also the national origin of the bilinguals in this nativity class. Three linguistic groups account for three-fourths (73.9 per cent) of the total. These

three are 925,040 of German origin, 718,980 of Spanish origin, and 518,780 descended from French ancestors. As the census authorities point out, these three represent, in the main, the descendants of original settlers in certain areas, such as the Germans in Pennsylvania, the French in Louisiana, and the Spanish in New Mexico.

The bilingual population is concentrated in certain regions in the United States, as are also the predominating linguistic elements. For the South, the percentage is 6.3 of the total white population; in the West, it is 18.3; in the North, it is 23.9. Persons whose mother tongue is Norwegian predominate among bilinguals in the North Central States; the French, in New England and Louisiana; the Italians, in New Jersey and New York; a majority of those whose mother tongue is Yiddish are residents of New York.

Of the total number of bilinguals, a total of 6,250,500 were enumerated as under 25 years of age. This equals more than a quarter (28.4 per cent) of the bilingual population, and amounts to approximately one-eighth (12.7 per cent) of the total white population who reported language data.

#### CURRENT EMPHASES AND CONCLUSIONS IN THE LITERATURE ON THE BILINGUAL CHILD

The bilingual child and his problems have been studied for the most part by psychologists and educators, who have concerned themselves chiefly with the relationship of bilingualism to (1) the mental development of the child, (2) his school achievements, (3) the development of speech difficulties, and (4) certain aspects of personality development. Current conclusions on these four points will be presented in summary form.<sup>1</sup>

#### *Bilingualism and Mental Development.*

The literature on the mental development of the bilingual child is voluminous, and tells chiefly the results of intelligence tests given to comparable groups of bilingual and monoglot children. After examin-

<sup>1</sup> An excellent summary of the literature on bilingualism is presented by Seth Arsenian under the title, "Bilingualism in the Post-War World," in the *Psychological Bulletin*, February, 1945, pp. 65-86. The article includes a bibliography of 46 selected references. Consult also the annual *Year Books* of the National Society for the Study of Education, Public School Publishing Company, Bloomington, Ind., particularly the 28th and 38th *Year Books*, published in 1929 and 1939, respectively.

ing nearly 100 investigations in this country and abroad, Arsenian draws the following conclusions:

a. Bilingual children as compared with monoglot children of the same age and environment are neither retarded nor accelerated in their mental development. This is particularly evident on the basis of non-language tests of intelligence.

b. When verbal tests are used, bilingual children fall short of their monoglot contemporaries, and the disparity increases as the content of the test becomes more verbal.

c. The older the bilingual child and the higher his level of educational attainment, the smaller is the discrepancy.

d. The verbal intelligence tests show that the apparent retardation of bilingual children varies from place to place and from group to group. Bilingual children in urban areas show less or no retardation.<sup>2</sup>

#### *Bilingualism and School Achievement.*

Investigators are almost unanimous in their conclusions regarding the lower school performance of the bilingual child. This deficiency is most apparent in verbal studies, such as reading and history, but tends to disappear in non-verbal subjects, such as arithmetic and science. Also, it decreases with succeeding grades; thus it is most marked at the elementary-school level, at the high-school level the difference is slight, and during the college years it disappears altogether.

#### *Bilingualism and Speech Defects.*

Travis, Johnson, and Shover claim that the chances are 98 to 100 that the bilingual child will stutter more than the monoglot.<sup>3</sup> The Blantons report many bad cases of stuttering which involved bilingualism,<sup>4</sup> but Arsenian thinks that no definite conclusions can be deduced from the studies thus far available.

#### *Bilingualism and Personal Adjustment.*

Since the two languages involved in bilingualism are, in the United States, not of equal prestige, the question arises concerning the relation

<sup>2</sup> Arsenian, *op. cit.*, pp. 73-74.

<sup>3</sup> L. E. Travis, W. Johnson, and J. Shover, "The Relation of Bilingualism to Stuttering," *Journal of Speech Disorders*, 1937, pp. 185-189.

<sup>4</sup> M. G. Blanton and S. Blanton, *Speech Training for Children*, D. Appleton-Century Company, Inc., New York, 1919.



of bilingualism to personal adjustment. Spoerl equated two groups of college freshmen on mental ability, age, sex, and socio-economic status, and then studied the personal and social adjustment of the two groups; he presents the following findings:

Our conclusion, then, is that the emotional maladjustment of the bilingual student, insofar as it expresses itself in terms of reactions to social frustration, and particularly in terms of family disharmony, is the result of the culture conflict to which the native-born children of immigrants are subjected. But this culture conflict is complicated by the bilingual environment. Thus it is that bilingualism enters into the situation, not in its intra-personal aspects, but rather as a symbol of one of the environmental factors converging upon the second generation. Most of the emotional maladjustment of the bilingual student is environmentally determined, and is not the result of mental conflict engendered by the complexities of thinking or speaking in two languages. This is true of the social maladjustment, the lack of harmony in the home situation, and the lack of identification with the present environment (coupled with a rejection of the cultural background of the parents), all of which tends to characterize college students who are bilingual.<sup>5</sup>

#### THE BILINGUAL AS A PERSON

A careful reading of the literature on bilingualism suggests three further facts. First, its chief significance probably is in the realm of the social development of the person, with particular reference to the emotional reaction of the bilingual and the effect of the "other" language vestiges upon his relations with his fellows. Second, it is when the bilingual is young that the problem is most important, which means also that it is the family situations that are most fraught with significance. Third, it is this relation of bilingualism to personality development, and the nature of the situational approach to the problem, which have been least investigated. As Arsensian puts it, "There are many speculative claims but little experimental evidence."<sup>6</sup> The following inductive study is therefore presented as a possible contribution to this field, and with the hope of suggesting some of the situational aspects which need to be investigated.

#### *Methodological Note.*

This study is based upon seventeen case documents. Some of them are self studies furnished by bilinguals. These individuals are highly

<sup>5</sup> D. T. Spoerl, "Bilinguality and Emotional Adjustment," *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, January, 1943, pp. 56-57.

<sup>6</sup> Arsensian, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

intelligent, with some training in personal and social observation, and were selected because they seemed to show evidence of a certain objectivity of insight into their own personality development. A second group of documents was obtained from members of the subjects' families, such as wife, niece, or cousin, who had an opportunity for continued close association with the subjects and who had some training in obtaining and recording social data. A third group of documents was obtained and recorded on the basis of repeated interviews in which, once the project had been explained, the subjects were encouraged to talk along the lines of the nondirective method.<sup>7</sup> Finally, several personal documents, already published, which lent themselves to the purposes of this study, were utilized. This case material has been gathered during the years 1941-1945.

Reference should be made to the relative difficulties encountered in obtaining valid case material. There were three groups of adult bilinguals with whom the study was discussed and from whom no satisfactory case material was secured. One group appeared reluctant to give information, at least with any degree of frankness. Feelings of shame or embarrassment were manifest, or a certain degree of impatience, as though the earlier linguistic experience was now forgotten and had better remain so. A second group, quite willing to discuss the study and give information, seemed to reflect an almost aggressive pride in their linguistic background. These were persons who had utilized their bilingual equipment in an occupational way, and were given to emphasize only the educational and cultural values of facility in more than one language. They showed little or no interest in the personality problems involved. The third group, equally willing to offer testimony, reflected an attitude which can be understood only when viewed in terms of a life span. These were adults who, early in life, either as immigrants or as their descendants, experienced the immigrant's sense of inferiority about many things including his language, but who now, after becoming established in life, had again become conscious, and perhaps proud, of their mother tongue. None of these individuals is included in the seventeen cases utilized in this study, but their distinguishing attitudes serve to suggest some personality patterns found among bilinguals.

The total number of cases is not large enough to make any statistical

<sup>7</sup> Carl R. Rogers, "The Nondirective Method as a Technique for Social Research," *American Journal of Sociology*, January, 1945, pp. 279-284.

summary or to draw any definite conclusions. This study is meant only to be suggestive, with the possible hope of stimulating further research in the general area of investigation.

#### TWO IMPORTANT VARIABLES

From the material gathered, it is obvious that the nature and importance of the problems identified, as well as of the factors involved, vary from place to place and from group to group. Two basic variables are easily apparent. First is the ecological setting of the bilingual. This has to do principally with the area in which he is considered, and with reference mainly to the normalcy or unusualness of his bilingualism. For example, to be bilingual in the heart of the Pennsylvania German belt is to be what the great bulk of the people are. The bilingual is the normal person, operating with individuals who are also bilingual. The same is true in the French Acadian settlements in Louisiana and in Spanish settlements in New Mexico. It is the vogue to be bilingual. This is quite different from being bilingual in an area which is largely, or almost wholly, unilingual.

A special phase of the ecological setting of the individual, particularly significant in this connection, obtains in our large urban centers with their heterogeneous populations. Here there exist, not only large and populous areas in which one language predominates, but sections in which the inevitable mixture of linguistic groups results in areas where the particular linguistic situation creates its own norms of expression. For example, in some areas of our large cities the young people deliberately refrain from speaking an "unmixed" English lest their "crowd" accuse them of being "high-hat."

The second basic variable is the social attitude toward the other language. This grows out of the first variable but has in it elements of difference. The attitude toward a language cannot be separated from the attitude toward the people whose language it is. The upper classes develop the socially accepted medium of speech, so deviations from it appear also as deviations from an upper-class status. What is the social status of the non-English tongue? How are the linguistic differences related to class distinctions? Moreover, the language of minority groups, when they have their own distinctive language, becomes an index of minority group status. In a rapidly status-changing society different phases of the problem become very important.

## IMPACT UPON FAMILY RELATIONS

In all these cases, there are references to the differences that developed within the family in the acquisition and use of English. The basic facts are that the different members learned to utilize the second language at differing times and with unequal skills. The pattern of sequence is similar in most cases—the children learn it first, then the father, and last, and at times least, the mother. Some families showed important differences between the siblings, and in at least one case this proved rather troublesome in sibling relationships. Two of the cases, typical of many others, reveal situations in which English-speaking parents of foreign stock taught the “family language” to the child first, and followed this with large doses of English before the school years arrived.

Several of these cases refer to the habit of bilingual conversations in the home, the parent utilizing the non-English language and the child answering in English. At times this seems to have happened with no manifestation of tension, as a concession to the parents; but others emphasize that these two-way conversations involved differences of attitudes toward the languages used, and were attended by feelings of tension, embarrassment, or bitterness.

The significance of these linguistic differences for relationships within the family seems to be much influenced by the parental reactions to them. Where the acquisition of the new language is hailed as a new educational experience in which all the members share, there is far less possibility of tension. But where the parents forbid, discourage, or frown upon the children's efforts, the results are quite different. Mangione describes his mother's reaction to his interest in the non-use of Italian: “My mother took no notice of such childish snobbery. As long as I remained under her jurisdiction she continued to cling to her policy of restricting the family language to Italian. ‘I might as well not have my children if I can't talk with them,’ she argued. She considered it sinful for relatives to permit their children to speak a language which the entire family could not speak fluently, and claimed that if she were to cast aside Italian, the language of her forbears, it would be like renouncing her own flesh and blood.”<sup>8</sup> The attitude of the mother is particularly significant because of her role as the pivotal center of the

<sup>8</sup> Jerre Mangione, *Mount Allegro*, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1942, p. 53.

home, and her constant and continuing contacts with the children.

A careful reading of this case material seems to warrant the following conclusions: (1) In all cases, there is an awareness of the language problem on the part of all members of the family, and a certain preoccupation with it. This is particularly obvious during the period when the children are growing up. (2) Under the most fortunate circumstances, the bilingual situation appears to involve a nervous strain, a certain added effort to shift gears, as it were, from one linguistic level to another. It adds another dimension to family relationships. (3) Children sense that their parents are different from other parents. This precipitates early a certain objectivity in attitude toward the parent, a comparative appraisal, as it were. This was rather clearly revealed in some of our interviews. (4) The effect of the linguistic difference appears to be more marked when family relationships are otherwise intimate and limited and continuing. The size of the family is important: the smaller the family the more significant the linguistic difference. (5) In most cases, the children early developed definite feelings of resentment against the parents because of the latter's inability or unwillingness to keep pace with them in the use of English. At times this takes the form of contempt for the parents' seeming inability, or there is impatience with the slow rate of progress and the parents' lack of interest; often what seems most marked is a general irritation about the situation as a whole. In two of the cases studied, strong feelings of hatred against the parents developed. (6) Several of the cases emphasize that early in life the subjects came to practice an avoidance technique, avoiding conversation with their parents within the home, avoiding their parents away from home, or both. The child who rejects the parental language rejects, as it were, the parent who speaks it. "I remember I used to cross the street to avoid meeting up with my father or mother. Neither had good eyesight, and I would be on the alert whenever I got anywhere near to places where I might see them. Once mother came to school. I saw her in the hallway between classes and ducked out the back door. I had rather a hard time explaining my sudden absence on that day." (7) Almost without exception, the parents and grandparents seem to have no appreciation of the importance of the foreign-language problem to the children, other than its possible effects upon the rate of educational progress. Their own identification with their language is so close that they cannot understand their own child's rejection of it. Especially was this so in two of

these cases in which the other language was French. "What do you mean," shouted the regal grandmother, "Jack doesn't want to speak the language which is the standard of culture the world over?" But Jack's reply was: "The fellows say: 'That's a heck of a language.'"<sup>9</sup>

#### BILINGUALISM AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

The acquisition of a language is referred to commonly as the child's outstanding intellectual achievement. The major part of this achievement occurs during the years of early childhood. This is also the period of primary personality development. It seems, then, both inevitable and obvious that the nature of the linguistic development should have meaning for the processes of personality formation. Three aspects of this appeared in the course of this study.

First is the fact of the double linguistic task. The acquisition of two languages and of facility in their use tremendously increases the task imposed upon the child. It is a double task, with the added strain of shifting from one to the other. This the child has to carry when other children with whom he competes face the simpler task of acquiring only one language. Only one of these cases refers explicitly to this, but we sensed it in other subjects in their constant references to their consciousness of the language problem as children; in their reiterated emphasis that it did not interfere with the learning process, "at least not much"; in their repeated allusions to their conscious determination to use one rather than the other language. In other words, the bilingual child has to face a double task, make an extra effort, place himself under a double strain, merely to gain the means of ordinary communication with his fellows. As a rule, this must be done without sympathetic help from his companions and his family—sometimes, without help from his teachers.

Second is the role of bilingualism in the development of confidence in the self. The development of self-confidence is a phase of the process of growing up. It has its time dimension, measured in terms of the first two or three decades of life. In this process, the ability to express oneself adequately and acceptably is of great importance. Here again the bilingual child and youth are apt to experience a handicap. The cases studied indicate this, both by direct statement and through inference. Especially is this true when the "other" language is one

<sup>9</sup> The conclusions presented here may be compared with the point of view presented by Spoel in *op. cit.*, pp. 35-57.

that is not socially acceptable. Consciousness of a foreign accent is particularly serious in the adolescent stage, with its strong pull of loyalties to groups other than the family. The bilingual background marks the adolescent as different from other members of these groups. "The difference that pained me most was that of language, probably because I was aware of it most often. Child that I was, I would feel terribly embarrassed whenever my mother called to me in Italian while I was playing on the street, with all my playmates there to listen; or when she was buying clothes for me and would wrangle in broken English with the salesmen about the price."<sup>10</sup> Awkwardness of expression due to bilingualism, or the audible identification of the accent, imposes additional difficulties in the development of confidence in the self.

Third, and akin to this, is the social ridicule which children give to the linguistic variant. Children can be diabolically cruel to each other, and linguistic differences are often magnified by them to ridicule their companions. "W. Somerset Maugham was born and reared in France. He knew French before he knew English, and when he went to England after the death of his father to live with a clergyman uncle, the vicar of Whitstable, he became something of a butt at school because of his frequent mispronunciation of English words. He still remembers the roar of laughter that greeted him when he read the phrase "unstable as water" as though "unstable" rhymed with "Dunstable."

"He had a pronounced stammer, which persists to this day, though in a far less severe form."<sup>11</sup>

#### THE DEVELOPMENT OF PROTECTIVE DEVICES

Most of the persons included in this study refer, in one way or another, to the development of behavior patterns whose purpose it was to protect them from the consequences of their bilingualism. These are identified as *protective devices*. Four are selected for brief characterization.

##### *Restrained Manner of Speaking.*

Robert says that he sensed very early in his school career the social attitude toward his "other" language. He set himself consciously and persistently to overcome his accent. He would spend hours reading aloud to himself, and he would repeat passages, trying all the while to make his

<sup>10</sup> Mangione, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

<sup>11</sup> Hamilton Basso, "Profiles," *The New Yorker*, January 6, 1945, p. 28.

voice sound as much as possible like that of one of his teachers. As time went on, he came to learn that when he spoke slowly and softly, no or little accent was discernible. It was only when he became excited, spoke rapidly or angrily, that he betrayed himself. From his twelfth to his twenty-third year, Robert says that his conscious daily effort was to speak in a quiet, restrained manner. At that time, he was married. His wife seems to have been attracted to him in particular because of these traits.

### *Inconspicuous Behavior.*

When Peter was a boy, there were constant references to his "other" language. Many of these were references of ridicule. Peter was much ashamed of his lapses into his family language and of his accent. He found that the more inconspicuous he made himself, the fewer the times when the unwelcome label was attached to him. Peter says he became quiet and meek, as a result. He remembers that he permitted other boys to impose upon him.

### *Home Avoidance.*

"Another thing I remember," writes John, "is that I brought none of my school friends to my home, because the few times I did, my parents seemed to go out of their way to display their native speech and mannerisms to my friends. What social life I had from my twelfth to my twentieth year was away from home, and most of it was with boys, who were less prone to remind me of my background. During those years, how well do I remember that every friendly relationship I had was manipulated so that I need not bring my companions to my home. One way in which I managed this was to choose all my friends in another part of the city than where I lived."

### *Meticulous English.*

All of these cases show a deep consciousness of the importance of language and of the manner of speech. All reveal a compensatory concern with correctness of expression.

Howard tells how, from his first year in school, he steadfastly refused to speak any language but English, even to his foreign-language-speaking family. This involved a series of battles with his family, but after winning out, he turned to the pursuit of perfecting his English. "I lived with a dictionary under my arm. I read avidly, wrote a good deal, and practiced speech when alone. For years, I never spoke without self-consciousness, for fear that the ungrammaticalness of my parents and brothers would creep into my speech. I thought out every word carefully before speaking. At school, I was drawn to my English teachers, who encouraged me and helped me."

For other subjects, this pursuit of "perfect English" dictated occupations, selected friendships, led to withdrawal from kinship groups,



and in various other ways influenced the organization of the life pattern, particularly during adolescence, all to the end that an acceptable speech, without foreign trace, might be achieved.

#### THE LINGUISTIC LABEL

The label is one of the most common devices which people use against each other. It is particularly effective as an instrument of oblique attack or of depreciation. Its constant use by politicians is the best proof of its devastating force. Careful students of social relations await a definitive treatise on the sociology of the label.

Linguistic vestiges which identify one with some particular population group are constantly made the basis of labels. These serve to identify the stereotype. Examples are "The Dutchman," "Hunkie," "Frenchy," "The Swede," etc. Eight of our subjects refer to the fact that linguistic labels were attached frequently to them, and all but one indicate some resentment of it. In four of the cases the resentment apparently was pronounced.

#### BILINGUAL VESTIGES. THEIR OCCUPATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

The ability to express oneself adequately and acceptably is of particular importance in the occupational world, and the higher the occupational level the more important it seems to become. How university graduates in business rate it was revealed clearly in a study made by the author a number of years ago. A total of 1636 graduates of the Wharton School of Finance and Commerce of the University of Pennsylvania were asked, in the light of their subsequent business experience, to make an appraisal of the importance of the various fields of knowledge covered in their undergraduate days. The outstanding result of these appraisals was the marked emphasis given to "studies and practice in the oral and written use of the English language." More than three-quarters (75.9 per cent) of the total number of graduates believed that training in the written and oral use of English was of primary importance. No other field of knowledge was so emphasized.<sup>12</sup>

Four aspects of the occupational significance of bilingual vestiges appear in the case material. One of these emphasizes its professional utilization.

<sup>12</sup> James H. S. Bossard and J. Frederic Dewhurst, *University Education for Business*, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1931, chap. 8.

John Wojacks grew up in a foreign-language home. By the time he was graduated from college, he had acquired a good command of the English language, although he spoke it with a pronounced accent, slowly, and occasionally at a loss for the proper word. By the time he acquired the doctorate, he spoke as slowly as ever, but gradually the hesitating and timid manner gave way to a seemingly deliberate ponderous manner, as though he were speaking *ex cathedra*. After the doctorate was awarded, John went into college teaching, where his progress has been rapid. He speaks today with an accent as pronounced as it was twenty years ago. He still speaks slowly, and with great show of assurance. He does not think a foreign accent is a handicap. He apes the mannerisms of the European scholar, and apparently these have impressed many persons on the staff of his institution. He is spoken of constantly as a great scholar, although his output of scholarly work has been rather meager.

Another case emphasizes the handicap for salesmanship that results from bilingual vestiges.

Benjamin Stern has been a traveling salesman. He was reared in a Yiddish-speaking home, and he speaks English today with a marked Yiddish accent. Benjamin says that this fact handicaps him in selling, particularly in certain areas of the country. He hopes that, when the war is over, his territory will be confined to New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore, where his accent will be less of a handicap.

A third subject refers to repeated instances in which the "other" language tended to confer professional prestige.

William's background is Greco-Turkish. As a clergyman, he finds that in the eyes of some of his church members this background adds color to his personality and his sermons, and lends authority and prestige to his exegetical study courses or sermons, based upon the Greek texts.

A fourth instance, involving professional discrimination, appears quite incidentally in the case material.

Harry was himself reared in a non-English-speaking home, but has lost most traces of it. In speaking of his referral to a psychiatrist several years ago, he mentioned the fact that this psychiatrist spoke with a pronounced foreign accent. "Imagine sharing your innermost thoughts with a person who cannot talk your language. I did not go back to him again."

#### THE LANGUAGE OF ENEMY NATIONS

Falling into a special group are the cases in which the "other" language is that of a nation with whom the United States is at war. Most important of these is the German. Twice within a generation,

with the English language was greater than that of many of my classmates, some of whom were handicapped, I am sure, by their awkwardness in the use of English. I remember that the boy at the foot of the class also spoke English quite poorly. We called him that 'Deutscher Dumkopf' (that German ignoramus).

"My early German-language background was a serious problem in my life for many years, but I cannot say that it ever interfered with the learning process in my school work. The problems it created for me have been wholly social. From about my tenth year on, I began to see that working people and the common classes spoke German, while the educated, refined and wealthy persons spoke English. Furthermore, I slowly became conscious of something called accent; that some people spoke English as though they had spoken it all of their lives, while others spoke English with a German accent.

"My thoughts about all this came to a focus when, in my fourteenth year, we moved to another town. Here the population was chiefly English and Scotch, and with the Irish as the new immigrant group. My favorite teacher was an English woman who spoke an excellent English. I remember having a crush on a girl in my class with blue eyes, blonde hair, and broad A's.

"My 'Dutch accent,' as it was called, must have been conspicuous. It was noticed and commented upon. Now began a period in my life of definite unhappiness which lasted for about twelve years. In my High School classes, I was ashamed to recite orally; often, when asked a question in class, I would not answer even though I knew what the answer was. I was fearful of comment about my accent. My written work, the teachers all said, was much better than my oral work, and I alone knew the real reason for it. It was because I was ashamed to get up and speak. I can remember, too, making up many excuses to avoid oral recitations—a sore throat, an aching tooth, something in my eye, etc.

"Meanwhile, I was busy trying to do something about it. I began the practice of reading aloud, slowly and distinctly, repeating sentences and phrases to make them sound more English. I insisted that only English be spoken at home. My parents tried to do so, but the linguistic habits of a lifetime are not easy to break. Often they would forget, and then I would become sullen and refuse to answer them. The worst times for me came when my German-speaking relatives arrived for a visit. It was at these times that I was in turn embarrassed, irritated and embittered. I would stay away from home at such times, or, if at home, would speak only when spoken to and then only in monosyllables. Naturally my relatives noticed this. Some were hurt by it, others resented it, while most of them told my parents that I was a badly mannered young man from whom no good could be expected. All of this was embarrassing to my parents, but it left me only the more bitter. I began to hate all Germans—my parents, relatives and friends—because they seemed to personify all my personal problems which grew out of my German ancestry.

"Another thing I remember is that I brought almost none of my school friends to my home, because the few times I did, my parents seemed to go out of their way to display their German speech and mannerisms to my friends. What social life I had was away from my home, and most of it was with boys, who were less prone to remind me of the fact that I was German.

"Just as I was graduating from High School my family moved to the city in which I had been born and where we had lived until I was thirteen. Naturally, my parents were overjoyed to return to their old friends with its preponderance of people of German stock. As for me, I hated it. I kept aloof from my boyhood friends, withdrawing more and more within myself. I found a job and pleaded that I was too busy or too tired to go out. Particularly did I avoid girls, for reasons which I remember today quite distinctly. A Germanized girl I did not want, a non-German, i.e., of English-speaking ancestry, I would be unwilling to bring to my home to meet my German parents. It all seemed very clear to me then that the only safe thing to do was not to allow myself to become deeply interested in any woman. Thus arose my decision to remain unmarried, to which I adhered for a number of years.

"Then came the first World War. The feeling against the Germans in this country was very strong. I was ashamed of my name, of my family and of my ancestry. More and more did I withdraw within myself. I think perhaps the chief effect of my German ancestry upon me during all these years was this—that I never acted naturally. I was always hesitant, afraid, insecure. Later on, I became more and more artificial, playing a part; I became very quiet and reserved. I kept away from my childhood friends and relatives. I was with German folk, lived with them, but was not willing to be of them and to converse freely with them.

"After a short and unexciting war service during which I did not leave this country, I was mustered out with a firm resolution in the back of my mind. I would leave home, go far away, and begin life anew. My continued reading aloud and studied care in speech had enabled me to speak a 'German-less' English. I also made a slight change in my name, much to my parent's disgust.

"All that happened twenty-five years ago. During this time I have not returned once to my boyhood home, save when my mother died. My father has remarried, but I never see him. I have had no contacts during these years with my relatives or my earlier friends. I married when I was thirty-five. My wife knows almost nothing of this earlier part of my life, and I have loved her because she has asked nothing and never speaks of our lives before we came together. A few times I have met persons from my former world, who knew me as a boy, but I have never been more than polite.

"Sometimes, especially now that I am getting older, I feel sad about this complete withdrawing from my earlier life. It is as if I had no real roots. I envy my friends who do have these things. But now that we are

at war with Germany a second time, it is a great relief to live in a community which is not marked. My wife and I both are active in war work, and the happiness that is mine now more than repays me for all that I went through when I was a young man.

"I am 52 years old now and am able to look back over my life and see it in better perspective. It seems all very clear to me today that my German speech and my German ancestry have been the key to my whole life and the way in which it has developed. I cannot think about the first half of my life without remembering them. It seemed that they were always in my mind, influencing me, holding me back, embarrassing me, and leading me to do many things to shield myself from the problems which they created. If I had been willing to grow up a German, marry a 'Germanized' girl, go around with German-American kinfolk and friends, all might have been well and happy for me. But this I was never willing to do."

Obviously there are people living in the United States who speak the language of a one-time national enemy whose reactions are wholly different from the above.

#### THE REFUGEE AS A BILINGUAL

A phase of the enemy tongue problem, as well as a distinct aspect of the problem of the bilingual, is the case of the refugee who has come to the United States within recent years. The problems of these refugees are numerous and highly complicated, and the reference here is solely to a specialized aspect of the linguistic factor in these problems. Many of these refugees in this country acquire English later in life, and as a phase of the larger adjustment to American ways of life. The acquisition of English usually comes in connection with the refugee's occupational readjustment. The result of this, as seen through the eyes of a refugee, is evident in the case of Karl.

Karl came to the United States when past the thirtieth year. For him this marked the beginning of a new occupational career, and in a new language. Karl is an exceedingly able person, with excellent academic training, and with insight into his own problems. "Waiting in England for my immigration visa, I felt the first impact of the personality impairment which it means to live in a country where you know the language only unsatisfactorily. It seemed to me that I had lost the ability to make use of my personal and professional potentialities because I lacked any adequate facility of communication. I became convinced that I had to forge for myself a new tool of communication before I could start to participate again in the game of life. However, for a professional man such a tool has to be of high quality and I soon realized that it would take time to produce it.

"Shortly after my arrival in this country, it was my good fortune to receive guidance which led to my doing graduate work at a college of high

standing where I regained control of my ability of communication, but the tool was a new language and this meant that since that time my thinking and living was divided into two different departments dependent on the language I used.

"At home with my wife, in my letters to my parents and European friends, I still express myself and—what is more important—thought in German, but when I closed the apartment door behind me in the morning I stepped into another life which was dominated by English thought and expression. I cannot say that I found it difficult to make this daily transition, but after some time I began to realize that it implied certain limitations for my functioning in either sphere. In the German-language sphere it meant that the whole stock of new professional and life experience had to be retranslated or to be expressed in English which led to a mixed language usage which from the angle of language standards I felt to be regrettable. Similarly I had to translate my former life and professional experience into English if I wanted to use it on the outside in my new life; since here language mixture was unfeasible, this meant a certain handicap and particularly a slowing down of communication which I sometimes felt to be painful.

"At the present time I have enough language facility in English not to experience any handicap in expression, but I am still aware of my foreign accent when I am not carried away by my topic. This awareness again slows me down in speech and makes me appear more deliberate in behaviour than I think I would be on a spontaneity level.

"However, notwithstanding the fact that I am still aware of using a new language tool, I do not feel a professional handicap in this respect. As a matter of fact in my professional life bilingualism has become an asset because of the access which it permits to two spheres of communication complexes with bearing upon each other.

"In my private life, I still am under the impression that the fact that English came into my life so late, implies a certain limitation. In English I can only act as a person of my age, because I have no English child's talk nor adolescent's talk for that matter. If I want to revert to earlier periods in my life I am confined to German thought and expression. On the other hand, if I want to communicate present-day experiences to my relatives and friends it receives a somewhat second-hand character because my respective mental content is English and I have to translate it into German.

"I have tried to check this analysis by an observation of my word associations and have found that my associations are bilingual along the lines indicated. To words or pictures of family life or such matters as food I associate German words, to professional words and visual impressions I associate in English. Looking up from the typewriter in the room where I am typing this report I associated 'books' this very minute, but thinking of going home in the evening I associated 'Nachtmal,' the German word for dinner.

"If I had to bring the result of this analysis on a formula, I should say

that bilingualism has decreased the parochialism of my personality which seems to me an asset in personality range but a liability in personality harmony. Bilingualism has formed two compartments in my personality structure, and although they are by no means watertight they are still quite distinct."

At first glance, Karl's case coincides with our concept of the marginal person who lives in two worlds in part and in neither in entirety. This may be the traditional, and dramatic, way of putting it, but one is haunted by the question whether this is wholly and accurately true. Does Karl live in two worlds, and is his, then, a schizoid personality? Or is it the essential fact that he functions at two levels in the same world, playing dual linguistic and cultural roles, his main problem the "wear and tear" of shifting "gears" constantly?

#### LINGUISTIC IDENTIFICATION WITH STATUS

In searching for a key to the various aspects revealed by these seventeen cases, as well as the net impressions gained during the study, the concept of *linguistic identification with status* seems to be most fitting to the facts. By this is meant the assignment of status to the individual on the basis of his linguistic behavior measured in terms of the conformity or nonconformity of that behavior to the socially accepted modes of expression. It is proposed here as a fundamental social process, operating within the status system of the prevailing society and in terms of linguistic factors.

It is a further part of the thesis presented here that, although this is a generic process in all societies, it operates in the United States in two dimensions rather than in one. This difference is due to our highly heterogeneous population. In a nation with a homogeneous population, the process operates in one dimension. The socially acceptable form of expression is established in one language on a class basis, and status is determined in terms of adherence to or departure from it. In the United States, as in all countries where there are language minorities, there is for many persons the added dimension of bilingualism operating against a historical background of immigrant sequence and minority group status. In this additional dimension, a second language and its vestiges are bound up with the status of the particular minority group which speaks that language.

How linguistic identification with status operates in the United States may be explained in graphic terms, by means of a right-angle triangle. Let the vertical line be AB, with B at the base. The horizontal

line becomes  $BC$ . Let  $B$  identify the social elite form of expression of the dominant group. Departures from it on a class basis can be marked along the line  $AB$ , and bilingual vestiges can be marked along the line  $BC$  in terms of the "other" language group status. Consider now the case of individual  $X$ . He speaks a low-class or vulgate English, so his place on the perpendicular line  $AB$ , marked by  $X^1$ , is near  $A$ . He is a bilingual whose other language and minority group status, indicated by  $X^2$  on line  $BC$ , is quite near point  $C$ . The line  $X^1$  to  $X^2$  is relatively far removed from  $B$ ; hence his linguistic identification with status is low, measured in both dimensions. Other individuals will vary as either or both points on the status scale differ.

It must be added, by way of conclusion, that linguistic identification with status is not presented here as the whole explanation of the status system, but only as the system is affected by linguistic factors. Obviously, too, the role of these factors will differ from one society to another.

#### SUMMARY

1. Bilingualism, a phenomenon both common and old, takes different forms in different areas. In countries of immigration, like the United States, it becomes an aspect of minority groups and their status.

2. One out of five white persons in the United States grew up in a home in which some language other than English was the principal one spoken during earliest childhood. Eight linguistic groups account for 17,646,600 such individuals. Most of these people are to be found in the population of foreign-born white stock, but in 1940 there were 2,929,060 cases among the native-born white of native-born white parentage, a significant illustration of cultural persistence.

3. Studies of the effect of bilingualism on child development indicate: (a) some effect upon mental development when verbal tests are given, but this tends to disappear as the level of intellectual attainment rises; (b) a rather general consensus that the school achievement of the bilingual child suffers, especially in the lower grades; (c) that speech defects may be more numerous; and (d) that the chief problems are personal and social adjustment.

4. A study of seventeen case histories of bilinguals suggests the nature of the problems of the bilingual as a person, arising chiefly from the fact that the "other" language identifies the child with his minority group status. The concept of linguistic identification with status seems to fit the facts best.



## The Role of the Guest<sup>1</sup>



Underlying a good deal of the literature on the family is the assumption that it consists primarily of a peculiarly intimate relationship between a particular man and woman. When the existence of child members is recognized, the family becomes a triad, but without any conception of much more than a quantitative change in the family situation. The more one studies family life, particularly in relation to child development, the more does this appear as an academic simplification not in keeping with the facts of everyday life. Actually, the child's family background tends to be very complex. Some of the factors in it have already been emphasized—the circle of kinsfolk, their relationship to the immediate family and to each other; the cultural background of the parents and the new synthesis which results from the union of these two cultures; the interaction of the personalities of the parents; the sibling interrelations; and parent-child relationships. In addition there are other factors—family guests, domestic servants, domesticated animals,<sup>2</sup> and the like. For the child in particular, these are part and parcel of the whole segment of life that is organized around the family. This and the succeeding chapter are concerned with a consideration of two of these factors, and their role in child development.

The present chapter is devoted to the role of the guest in child development; and, in the absence of other scientific data, chief reliance is placed on a study of this problem now being made under the auspices of the William T. Carter Foundation at the University of Pennsylvania. Included in the chapter are certain methodological observations

<sup>1</sup> Part of this chapter is taken from an article, "The Role of the Guest," which appeared in the April, 1947, issue of the *American Sociological Review*, with Mrs. Eleanor S. Boll, Research Associate at the William T. Carter Foundation, as co-author. Reproduction here is by courtesy of the *American Sociological Review*, and Mrs. Boll.

<sup>2</sup> For a brief survey of the ways in which a domesticated animal becomes part of family life, the reader is referred to J. H. S. Bossard, "The Mental Hygiene of Owning a Dog," *Mental Hygiene*, July, 1944, pp. 408-413.

concerning the study and a summary of the present conclusions on the data assembled.

#### METHODOLOGICAL OBSERVATIONS

Two questions arise at once. First, what is a guest? That is to say, how is the unit of study defined? And second, can the guest role be isolated from other factors in child development? The word guest, as defined in this study, is a person who comes into a family group and produces in it enough of a feeling of newness or strangeness as to give rise to an awareness of the guest role. That is, a person is a guest if the family thinks of him as a guest. It was on this basis that the question of the inclusion or exclusion of relatives and intimate family friends or neighbors was decided. Kinsfolk living next door and constantly passing out of and into the home were not thought of as guests. On the other hand, the closest relatives, if they came from a distance or made an occasional visit and were received and treated as guests, were considered guests. Similarly with neighbors or friends. Individuals so familiar to the family as to pass wholly or virtually unnoticed were not counted as guests. To be a guest, one must be so considered by the family and the child.

Can the role of the guest be isolated from other factors in the child's development? Obviously not, any more than any other factor can be isolated. The group and cultural pattern which is the foundation of the development of personality is an extensive one; the guest role is inextricably bound up with many others. The separation of the role of the guest in this study is entirely arbitrary and academic, done for purposes of analysis and ease of presentation. As long as only relative importance is assigned to the guest in comparison with other factors in the child's development, such a procedure, it is hoped, may be permissible.

The 400 case records upon which the study is based were gathered from four sources. First is a series of interactive interviews with adults, persons of middle age and past (60 cases). Second are interviews with, and written statements from, children from ten to fifteen years of age (40 cases). They were selected on the basis of high intelligence and insight, as judged by the authors on the basis of continued personal contacts, or by their teachers. Third is a number of autobiographical notes by young men and women, chiefly of university age and status, who were asked to describe, at leisure and in written form, their recol-

lections of guests in their homes, and how they reacted to them (100 cases). The study, as planned originally, was confined to these three sources. However, persons consulted about the project and its methodology were apprehensive lest impressions and recollections furnished by the subjects be influenced by the suggestions of the interviewers. To meet this criticism, it was decided to analyze 200 published autobiographies to ascertain to what extent the authors made any reference to the role of guests in their early home life or personal development. The only basis of selection was that the authors must have written to some extent about their early life. These autobiographical notes constitute the fourth source of material for the study as a whole.

#### THE USE OF AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL MATERIAL<sup>3</sup>

The values and defects of autobiographies in the study of behavior have been discussed by Allport, Krueger, Burr, Murchison, and others. References to the subject's early life prove particularly problematical, because recorded recollections do not as a rule extend into that initial period of life which today is considered so significant for its formative functions. Moreover, they are proverbially unreliable. But despite these and other limitations, autobiographical material may have distinct values in the recording of concrete facts, existing situations, driving motives to behavior, and post-infantile factors of conduct.

Its use in the present study has a specific purpose, in addition to any other values inherent in it. This purpose is to show to what extent and in what ways people, chiefly of distinction and intelligence, who in maturer years survey the "scenes of their childhood," emphasize, without the promptings or suggestions of a research project, the role of the guest in their early family life and personal development. In other words, how do persons to whom the importance of a guest has not been suggested by questioners and questionnaires write of family guests in their early development? It is believed that the answer to these questions is of value, first, as an indication of the importance which authors of autobiographies attach to the role of the guest; second, as a revelation of the ways in which the guest is considered to be important; and third,

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Gordon W. Allport, *The Use of Personal Documents in Psychological Science*, Social Science Research Council, New York, 1942. This report contains an extended bibliography. See also Louis Gottschalk, Clyde Kluckholm, and Robert Angell, *The Use of Personal Documents in History, Anthropology, and Sociology*, Social Science Research Council, New York, 1945.

for the leads it suggests for the personal interviews which constituted a subsequent part of the study.

#### DESCRIPTIVE SUMMARY OF AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL MATERIAL

##### *Incidence of Guest Narratives in Autobiographies.*

The first outstanding fact is that in a group of 200 autobiographies selected at random, but including the author's childhood, 117 contained direct references to guests entertained at home. Eighty-three made no mention of any visitors.

The authors who did write about guests varied considerably in the extent to which they included experiences with guests as important parts of their history. These variations ranged from a two- or three-line reference to whole chapters devoted to visitors and their entertainment. In only two cases, though, did the author mention guests in such an incidental way as to make the reader assume that neither the fact of the entertaining nor the guest himself had made upon the child an important, conscious impression which lasted into adulthood. All the other 115 authors related such experiences as vivid, lasting impressions, worthy of record as part of a family or of a personal history.

##### *Amount of Entertaining.*

The amount of entertaining by the authors' families also varied a great deal. Half the writers gave their readers no clue as to the frequency of visiting in their homes. The other half were specific. Forty-five mentioned that their parents had guests frequently, or almost all the time. Eight wrote that there were very few visitors, and three mentioned times in their lives when their family's entertaining habits changed radically, from often to seldom, or the reverse.

The amount of entertaining had no marked correlation with the importance given to guests in the life story. One of the merely incidental references was made to let the reader know that the author's father had many visitors, whereas some of the authors who stated that their families had few guests devoted pages to the description of those few.

In the 117 life stories, there were 202 separate allusions to guests visiting the home. These were studied individually for the analysis

of experiences with guests which is to follow. They were of two kinds. First, there was the allusion to guests in general and to their entertainment. These served to show the *kinds* of guests that came to the home and the kinds of entertainment offered them, how the parents reacted generally in the presence of a guest, and how the children acted, or were supposed to act. There were 36 such references. Second, there was the mention of a specific guest or number of guests at a specific time. There were 166 such allusions.

*Characteristics of the Authors.*

In a large majority of cases, the author's success in some occupation or profession inspired the writing of his life story. But lack of success was also an instigator of self-revelation, as was the accident of royal birth, or just a rich or extraordinary life. Below is a list of the adult status of the people whose experiences with guests were studied:

|                                               |                           |
|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 4 editors                                     | 2 artists                 |
| 1 publisher                                   | 1 photographer            |
| 51 writers                                    | 1 cartoonist              |
| 25 novelists                                  | 5 actors                  |
| 3 poets                                       | 1 opera singer            |
| 3 playwrights                                 | 1 musician                |
| 4 newspaper correspondents<br>and journalists | 6 teachers and professors |
| 4 biographers                                 | 1 physicist               |
| 2 historians                                  | 1 psychologist            |
| 10 others                                     | 1 botanist                |
| 4 diplomats                                   | 1 philologist             |
| 1 Congressman                                 | 1 engineer                |
| 1 member of the House of<br>Commons           | 1 lawyer                  |
| 1 governor                                    | 1 inventor                |
| 1 President of the U.S.A.                     | 1 clergyman               |
| 1 naval intelligence officer                  | 1 Jesuit                  |
| 1 fleet captain                               | 1 explorer                |
| 1 soldier                                     | 1 rancher                 |
| 1 business executive                          | 4 travelers               |
| 1 building commissioner                       | 1 cook                    |
| 1 physically afflicted person                 | 1 welfare officer         |
| 3 members of racial minority<br>groups        | 1 social worker           |
| 2 members of royalty                          | 1 social reformer         |
| 5 doctors                                     | 1 person on relief        |

The sex and nationality of the authors were as follows:

|                      | MALE | FEMALE | TOTAL |
|----------------------|------|--------|-------|
| American             | 39   | 25     | 64    |
| British and European | 32   | 14     | 46    |
| Russian              | 2    | 3      | 5     |
| Japanese             |      | 1      | 1     |
| Latin American       |      | 1      | 1     |
| Total                | 53   | 44     | 117   |

Most of the authors recalled and reported on the guests who visited them when they were children not yet in their teens. Only 32 visits made during the author's adolescence were recorded, as against 152 made while the author was a young child.

#### ANALYSIS OF GUEST NARRATIVES

A number of the observations in the autobiographies about the role of the guest in the family were echoed almost identically by author after author. These are assumed to be common features of the entrance of visitors into a family circle, at least for this group of writers. They are classified below, and are described by selected examples from the autobiographies.

#### *The Guest as a Standard for Measuring Parents.*

A frequent common memory of guests mentioned by these autobiographers involved a comparison of the guest with a parent. The newness of a guest's behavior, as contrasted with the familiarity of the parent's personality, sometimes made children very sensitive to traits which they had either taken for granted or had not been aware of before. Here are some examples:

One of his father's "Sunday Evenings" was a long-remembered eye opener to one of the writers. This man's father had the utmost contempt for anyone who could not entertain the circle by doing a stunt. It was his only condemnation of a person. Joe, a guest, could do no stunts. He was a quiet, reticent man, and was figuratively cast aside by his host as having no "gumption." One night a bathroom pipe burst, releasing a torrent of water through the ceiling. The father was helpless; but Joe very quietly set about repairing the leak. The child thought:

This is no time for a nitwit entertainer. And his mother commented that his father could not have fixed that thing in a million years.<sup>4</sup>

Another author reports that as a boy he was thrilled by a guest who romped with him and never seemed to grow tired. His father, he realized, did not know how to play with youngsters, and if he tried, the play always ended in cross words and tears.<sup>5</sup>

The behavior of a mother who was always cold and harsh toward her daughter was high-lighted for still another writer on the occasion when a young lady guest took the child upon her lap and fondled her. The mother suddenly rose and knocked her daughter to the floor. The guest departed and never came back, but the girl always remembered the sharp contrast between the guest's behavior and her mother's.<sup>6</sup>

Vivian Hughes used to listen to her mother entertaining. She was pleased and amused by her mother's intelligence and sense of humor as compared with the stupidity of the "usual female visitors" who enjoyed only worries and grievances. She used to count the times these females said "Yes" in answer to her mother's tactful attempts to divert them with some new topics; and once, during an uneasy silence, she told her mother that she knew what she was thinking: What could she possibly say next?<sup>7</sup>

In some cases, it was not so much the direct comparison of personalities as it was the guests' estimates of parents which gave new insight to the children. Edgar Lee Masters was much gratified by the frequent visits of his school teacher to his mother, who had had no great amount of formal education but had read widely and had such a lively wit and sense of narrative that she was a match for the school mistress, and kept her roaring with laughter.<sup>8</sup> And William Gerhardi used to watch his mother dancing at the balls given for his sister. The mother was much sought after as a partner, and the boy felt that some of the men

<sup>4</sup> Leonard Feeney, *Survival Till Seventeen*, Sheed & Ward, Inc., New York, 1941, pp. 24-48.

<sup>5</sup> Martin Anderson Nexø, *Under the Open Sky*, Vanguard Press, Inc., New York, 1938, pp. 107-108.

<sup>6</sup> Hannah Lynch, *Autobiography of a Child*, Dodd, Mead & Company, Inc., New York, 1899, p. 48.

<sup>7</sup> Vivian Hughes, *A London Child of the Seventies*, Oxford University Press, London, 1934, p. 89.

<sup>8</sup> Edgar Lee Masters, *Across Spoon River*, Farrar & Rinehart, Inc., New York, 1936, p. 66.

who came to the house were more attracted to her than to his sister. He saw her, on those occasions, as beautiful and youthful-looking.<sup>9</sup>

Their parents' behavior before guests was also a revelation to the children: in some cases it was a source of new pride; in others, a severe disappointment. When the minister dropped in to see the father of one author and asked his host if he did not feel nearer to heaven every day, the father answered, "I can't say that I do." His son, listening, was overjoyed at his father's honesty and bravery, for he hated cant.<sup>10</sup> But another writer went through agonies watching his father "show off" and "tell tall tales" to the very respectable men he brought home. The boy was sure those men knew that his father was a shallow liar, and he could not understand why they put up with him.<sup>11</sup>

### *The Guest as a Measure of Family Status.*

A family has status only in comparison with the status of others. Small children are often well insulated from a recognition of their family's standing by a lack of that comparison. But sometimes, the guest serves to indicate the family's place, socially, religiously, or morally. The daughter of a well-to-do Russian patriarch reveals that she did not know she was living in luxury, so accustomed to it was she. But on Christmas, when all the peasants from her father's estate came to be entertained and to receive gifts from him, the girl gained a conception of her family's position in that country.<sup>12</sup> A farm boy, though, tells of his resentment over the yearly visits of his town aunts, because they let it be seen that their sister had married beneath her. He disliked to see his mother put on airs for them, and then become subdued in spirit before their superiority.<sup>13</sup> A successful novelist recalls her family's ups and downs in status as reflected by guests and the absence of guests. Her father, who had a succession of wives and mistresses, lived in a very "respectable" suburb, and no one came to call. The children knew why. But he finally took in, without benefit

<sup>9</sup> William Gerhardt, *Memoirs of a Polyglot*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1931, p. 49.

<sup>10</sup> Augustus White Long, *Son of Carolina*, Duke University Press, Durham, 1939, pp. 71-72.

<sup>11</sup> Sherwood Anderson's *Memoirs*, Harcourt, Brace & Company, Inc., New York, 1942, p. 45.

<sup>12</sup> Princess Catherine Radziwill, *It Really Happened*, Dial Press, Inc., New York, 1932, pp. 28-29.

<sup>13</sup> Cyrenus Cole, *I Remember, I Remember*, State Historical Society of Iowa, Iowa City, 1936, pp. 67-69.



of certificate, a woman who *looked* "respectable." Guests began to arrive, and with them the consciousness of a new family status.<sup>14</sup> It was through the chance remark of a thoughtless guest that Kathleen Coyle learned the secret, hitherto carefully kept from her, that her father was in an institution.<sup>15</sup> A doctor, whose Catholic mother had married a Protestant, learned that there was something unusual about his family, because the two sets of in laws alternated visits, each trying to salvage the souls of the children of such a marriage.<sup>16</sup>

*The Guest as a Means of Extending the Horizon of Beliefs and Customs.*

Most young children seem to be strongly convinced that there is only one true religious faith, one honest political party, one right code of ethics, one "proper" way of doing a certain thing, and they believe that people who believe and do differently are not themselves "proper." Often, this is not so much the result of personal smugness or of deliberate parental indoctrination as it is of a lack of intimacy with people whose beliefs and customs are unlike their own. The guest who is accepted by the parents as a "proper" person often discloses to the children during his visits a point of view different from, or directly opposite to, that which the family entertains. Sometimes the children are much shocked by these revelations, but nevertheless they come to see that people they know and like act differently and hold views different from theirs.

Pierre Van Paassen says that he was introduced to matzoth when a Jewish woman brought some to his family on Passover. The boy's mother was distressed that she could not return the favor by sending back some of her own fresh-baked cookies. But, she explained, the Jewish friends would not eat food prepared in a non-Jewish home. That, surely, was a puzzle for the boy to figure out.<sup>17</sup> One man tells how, as a boy, he watched the clergyman who had stopped in for the

<sup>14</sup> I. A. R. Wylie, *My Life with George*, Random House, Inc., New York, 1940, pp. 74, 81.

<sup>15</sup> Kathleen Coyle, *The Magical Realm*, E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., New York, 1943, pp. 167-169.

<sup>16</sup> William E. Aughinbaugh, *I Swear by Apollo*, Farrar & Rinehart, Inc., New York, 1938, pp. 6-8.

<sup>17</sup> Pierre Van Paassen, *Days of Our Years*, Hillman-Curl, Inc., New York, 1939, pp. 24-25.

habitual family prayer period. It was a highly conventionalized observance. Each member of the family took a chair and, kneeling down, leaned against the seat of it while going through the form of prayer. This clergyman simply dropped to his knees without any support at all—an amazing procedure. But what struck the boy even more forcibly was that to the reverend gentleman prayer seemed “real.” To the family it had become just a form.<sup>18</sup> In the realm of politics, one author was shocked, as a youth, by the visit to his Liberal household of a lady who shouted Tory principles and thought Mr. Gladstone “a dreadful man.”<sup>19</sup> And Julian Green reports that his charming young cousin, who was a loyal Southerner but who did not take her politics as seriously as did his own family, nearly brought on a family crisis when she started to play on the piano the hated song, “Marching Through Georgia.”<sup>20</sup> At home, Norman Hapgood had always heard people divided into the categories “selfish” and “unselfish,” and had never thought of tampering with that division. A visitor remarked that self-seeking was by no means always bad; it could as often be right as wrong. Hapgood wrote of that experience as being his first lesson in relativity, and he believed that it had some influence on his later career.<sup>21</sup>

Two of the autobiographers learned something about relative morality from guests in their homes. The young aunt of one of these writers had been sold to a house of ill fame, and the boy met her for the first time when she came to his home after she had been rescued. He had not expected to find her what she was—a pretty, merry girl, always singing. He wrote, “I began to understand that not everything in life was so dreadful as it seems at first until one knows.”<sup>22</sup> The other writer, who learned a similar lesson, came to admire a woman who “couldn’t say no” but who was generous, cheerful, and self-sacrificing, and whom no one could really consider bad.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Lawrence Housman, *The Unexpected Years*, Bobbs-Merrill Company, Indianapolis, 1936, p. 35.

<sup>19</sup> Maurice Baring, *The Puppet Show of Memory*, Little, Brown & Company, Boston, 1922, p. 15.

<sup>20</sup> Julian Green, *Memories of Happy Days*, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1942, pp. 25–28.

<sup>21</sup> Norman Hapgood, *The Changing Years*, Farrar & Rinehart, Inc., New York, 1930, pp. 17–19.

<sup>22</sup> Feodor Ivanovitch Chaliapin, *Pages from My Life*, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1927, p. 3.

<sup>23</sup> Anne Ellis, *The Life of an Ordinary Woman*, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1929, p. 58.

*The Guest as a Measure of the Consistency of Adults in Precept and Practice.*

Children often have the opportunity to observe in the privacy of the family circle that parents do not always practice what they preach. But the social gathering-together of adults can increase the opportunity for such observations when those adults are being companionable or convivial, and forgetful of the penetrating scrutiny of the younger generation. In both morals and manners, guests revealed adult inconsistencies to the authors of the autobiographies.

A parson kept visiting one writer's home in an effort to convert the father, who never went to church. The son noticed that, though the parson's efforts were unsuccessful, he consumed gallons of good rye while making them.<sup>24</sup> And Vivian Hughes tells of the vicar's wife, who, accepting her hostess' complaint about the dullness of the vicar's sermons, suggested, within hearing of the child, that her hostess "meditate instead of listening. That's what I do." Wasn't that practically heresy?<sup>25</sup> An actor's daughter writes about the night that she was wakened by the noise of a party, got out of bed, and slipped in among the guests unnoticed. Beer and rye were abundant. Members of her family were dressed in their wrappers. A man was holding Mamma's hand. Another was trying to kiss Nana, a favorite aunt; he was "nosing" into the lace cascade on the front of her wrapper.<sup>26</sup> A guest in another home was remembered because he tried to get into the servant girl's room in the middle of the night. Next morning he said that though he prayed to resist adultery, the Lord always put fresh temptation in his way. The youngster thought that this was "passing the buck" in a very strange way.<sup>27</sup> One autobiography tells of a boy watching a series of scenes between the Jewish stepfather-in-law and his mother. The man, who had come to visit, had to have his food prepared in the orthodox manner, which made a lot of trouble for the lady of the house. After a time, he suspected that she was only *pretending* to prepare his food properly. The youngster knew that these suspicions were correct—his mother was only pretending.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>24</sup> C. Blackburn Miller, *Hudson Valley Squire*, Frederick A. Stokes Company, New York, 1941, p. 14.

<sup>25</sup> Hughes, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

<sup>26</sup> Aline Bernstein, *An Actor's Daughter*, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1941, pp. 142-149, 108-110.

<sup>27</sup> Van Paassen, *op. cit.*, pp. 30-31.

<sup>28</sup> John Cournos, *Autobiography*, G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1935, pp. 26-30.

The manners of other guests did not live up' to the standards which adults said were required. Writers mentioned one guest who belched frequently behind his hand at table;<sup>29</sup> and another, who, when the child played the piano for him, shouted that that girl could not play and never would be able to.<sup>30</sup> Neither guest was reproached for his behavior. It was accepted by the other adults. But it was not the kind of behavior adults would tolerate in children.

*The Guest as a Medium for Teaching Certain Rules of Social Behavior.*

In the informal atmosphere of the family, a considerable laxity of manners and a wide choice of conversation topics are permitted that are not suffered outside the family circle. A mother can hardly anticipate *all* these differences for her young child. Yet most children somehow attain that knowledge by the time they reach their early teens. One of the roles of the guest seems to be to help clarify for the child what is, and what is not, expected in "polite society" at his own particular social level. Sometimes dismissal from the scene, because of the parents' inability to cope with the situation before guests, marks the lesson indelibly. Also, before the arrival of guests, harangues between parents who do not approve of each other's behavior before guests make children particularly keen to see who will win out when the guest does arrive. Autobiographers describe instances of all these kinds of lessons on how to behave when an outsider joins the family.

Differences in table manners were expected when guests were present. Frazier Hunt writes that his uncle, in whose home he lived, liked to eat his pie from the same plate on which his meat and vegetables had been. It tasted better that way. His aunt did not approve, and she let it be known. But Uncle would not be intimidated, that is, not until visitors came to dinner. Then he had to make a concession.<sup>31</sup> Grand Duchess Marie, when a little girl, found that when there was a visitor she could not take any part in the conversation; she could only answer questions when asked them. She had to sit, between courses,

<sup>29</sup> Olga Petrova, *Butter with My Bread*, Bobbs-Merrill Company, Indianapolis, 1942, p. 31.

<sup>30</sup> Jennie Lee, *This Great Journey*, Farrar & Rinehart, Inc., New York, 1942, pp. 37-41.

<sup>31</sup> Frazier Hunt, *One American*, Simon & Schuster, Inc., New York, 1938, pp. 7-8.

with the tips of her fingers on the edge of the table, and if she forgot she was reprimanded.<sup>32</sup>

A number of writers remembered being sent from the room for behavior which they had not known would get them into trouble. One, when a little boy, was absorbed in listening to some breezy gossip of his mother's when the vicar came to call. He waited patiently for the vicar to be welcomed and seated and then asked his mother to go on with the story about——. He was promptly sent upstairs.<sup>33</sup> Another, when a small child, found her baby chamber pot hidden away in a closet. She was ecstatic over finding her old friend and thought that her mother and the luncheon guests would be too. So she ran into the room and displayed it. Her mother fainted, and the girl was banished to the attic.<sup>34</sup> A third tells of hearing the cook say that if the vicar came to tea much oftener he would eat Auntie out of house and home. The girl thought the vicar ought to know, so she told him. But she was sent to bed without any supper.<sup>35</sup> The impressions made by these experiences were deep and long-lived. They probably brought the dawning of a consciousness of conversational taboos.

*The Guest May Change the Normal Family Regimen and Occasion Special Privileges for the Children.*

Some of the authors remembered how enchanted they had been with the changes in the usual family regimen when guests came. The "room," a parlor-bedroom, was used in the daytime only when guests came; special company cups and saucers were used instead of the usual dinnerware; a beautiful white tablecloth was put on the table instead of the red-checked one used for the family. "Company towels" instead of meal sacks, "company soap" instead of the yellow kind, "company tissue" instead of leaves from a mail-order catalogue—all were exciting differences in home life when a guest came.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Grand Duchess Marie of Russia, *Education of a Princess*, The Viking Press, Inc., New York, 1931, p. 36.

<sup>33</sup> Charles Finger, *Seven Horizons*, Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc., New York, 1930, pp. 10-11.

<sup>34</sup> Mara Millar, *Hail to Yesterday*, as told to Page Cooper, Farrar & Rinehart, Inc., New York, 1941, pp. 22-23.

<sup>35</sup> Jeanette Gilder, *The Autobiography of a Tomboy*, Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc., New York, 1901, p. 91.

<sup>36</sup> Hunt, *op. cit.*, pp. 8-9; Zora Neale Hurston, *Dust Tracks on a Road*, J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia, 1942, p. 34; S. B. McClure, *My Autobiography*, Fredenck A. Stokes Company, New York, 1914, pp. 5-6.

But personal privileges were even more interesting. When Padewski came to call, the children in the home of one author were allowed to come downstairs to hear him play.<sup>37</sup> Another musician's visits permitted André Gide to sit up long past his usually inflexible bedtime so that he could hear the concert.<sup>38</sup> David Fairchild writes that his father did not approve of Dickens but could not protest when a guest read *David Copperfield* to the young man of the house, who always remembered that wonderful novel.<sup>39</sup> Walter Damrosch recalls Taussig's visits, particularly because of the delicious apple pudding which Mrs. Damrosch made for him.<sup>40</sup> A longed-for trip to Calais, which had never been permitted, was attained by one of the authors when he asked his parents for permission in the presence of a guest, who answered before the parents could, and said, "Why not?"<sup>41</sup> These were marked high spots in the writers' life when the family had guests.

*Guests, Through Their Discussions with Each Other and with Parents During Visits, May Be an Intellectual Stimulus to Children.*

A common observation in these autobiographies is that their authors, as children, loved to listen to the conversations of grown-up guests, and were stimulated by them. The exact kind of stimulus depended upon the kind of people entertained and the type of entertainment offered.

In the homes represented here, there were five noticeably different habitual ways of entertaining guests. First, there was the home in which the adults sat in a group and indulged in aimless gossip and in telling anecdotes. Here the children were eager to learn the latest tales about people whom they knew. They struggled to keep well posted. Also, they loved to hear any simple anecdotes and remembered many of them. Second, there was the home in which guests were entertained by cards, games, and stunts. Several writers mentioned their own prowess in beating guests at the games played. Conversation was restricted during these visits, but one writer says that she was proud of

<sup>37</sup> Lincoln Ellsworth, *Beyond Horizons*, Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc., New York, 1938, pp. 9-11.

<sup>38</sup> André Gide, *If It Die* (tr. by Dorothy Bussey), Random House, Inc., New York, 1935, pp. 63-65.

<sup>39</sup> David Fairchild, *The World Was My Garden*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1938, p. 15.

<sup>40</sup> Walter Damrosch, *My Musical Life*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1924, p. 2.

<sup>41</sup> Richard Aldington, *Life for Life's Sake*, The Viking Press, Inc., New York, 1941, p. 32.

entering into the spirit of the games her father's friends played, and when Mr. Fitch won a hard hand she called out, "Good for you, Fitch!" much to the amusement of the men, who thought it a spontaneous remark. It was, instead, well calculated to produce just the effect it did produce.<sup>42</sup> A third type of entertainment was very formal: formal teas, dinners, and balls. Conversation here took place in little groups. The children were stimulated by the sense of rank, by social finesse, by styles of dress, by grace in dancing, and by personal popularity.

A fourth kind of entertainment was mentioned by two of the authors.<sup>43</sup> Both had come from peasant homes across the sea. In these homes the villagers all gathered together, and the old men of the village told stories—either folk tales, or historical stories about their country. These youngsters, listening as they sat on the floor of their homes, looked up to the wisdom of the old men, and knew their country's past. The fifth kind of entertainment was give-and-take discussion between intellectuals on topics of mutual interest, particularly the arts and sciences and current events. It is not surprising that this type was prevalent in the great majority of the homes of boys and girls who grew up to write their autobiographies. Some comments, direct from the authors, are worthy of quotation: "They [my parents] were rewarded . . . by many delightful friendships. Thinkers, writers, and travelers gathered about them. We children were fascinated by discussions, often over our heads, which went on in such assemblages."<sup>44</sup> "The literary and artistic life of the city, rich and poor, was represented [in our guests]. . . . The gaiety and the wit, and the degree to which the conversation represented the pulse of the times, made me discontented with anything less in my adult years."<sup>45</sup> "My mother's company and conversation as the years went by were necessarily a stimulation to any intelligence I possessed, and I think it made me precocious in one or two ways. One of them was the very strong interest that I took in all sorts of people."<sup>46</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Gilder, *op. cit.*, pp. 34-35.

<sup>43</sup> Chaliapin, *op. cit.*, p. 3; and Michael Pupin, *From Immigrant to Inventor*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1926, pp. 5-7.

<sup>44</sup> Ruth Huntington Sessions, *Sixty-Odd*, Stephen Daye Press, Brattleboro, 1936, p. 16.

<sup>45</sup> Roderick Peattie, *The Incurable Romantic*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1941, p. 40.

<sup>46</sup> W. B. Maxwell, *Time Gathered*, D. Appleton-Century Company, Inc., New York, 1938, p. 22.

*The Guest May Produce Conflicts and Increase Family Tensions.*

Often members of the family disagree in their estimates of a guest or of his behavior. In some cases, in these narratives, such differences became acute and caused family conflict. Harriet Munroe used to enjoy watching the games of the men who came to play cards with her father. But her mother did not approve of these people, who filled the house with smoke and required spittoons. The poet writes that she noticed when the men came less and less often, and that finally her father went out in the evenings to the home of a widower, instead of bringing his friends home.<sup>47</sup> Two of the authors tell of their jealousy of the men who came to visit their mothers. The boy was sullen and angry.<sup>48</sup> The girl decided upon action and told her mother's suitor that it was time to go home. Her mother was cross and scolded the child, who was thus doubly hurt.<sup>49</sup> Another writer reports that when he was very little he was upset by the elegant reception accorded two royal gentlemen who came to see his father. He much preferred the cook and the gamekeeper, who usually visited them. He slapped one of the gentlemen in the face and was annoyed by the oversolicitous attitude of his parents on the guest's behalf.<sup>50</sup>

*The Guest May Unite the Family in a Mild Conspiracy Against Him.*

The family often has a heightened sense of solidarity in the presence of an outsider, but at times circumstances make the family members more like fellow conspirators. Vivian Hughes tells of the time a guest who came to call in the afternoon and stayed and stayed. Her hostesses grew uneasy. Finally, Mrs. Hughes rose and said that though she liked to sit in the dusk without lights, she hardly expected her guest to share that enthusiasm. The guest chuckled and left. Vivian and her mother turned to each other, smiled, and relaxed. The gas company had turned off the gas, and the lights *could* not be lighted.<sup>51</sup> The young man who always brought useless gifts to the family, necessitating a

<sup>47</sup> Harriet Munroe, *A Poet's Life*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1938, p. 24.

<sup>48</sup> Leo Lania, *Today We Are Brothers*, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1942, p. 17.

<sup>49</sup> Marguerite Harrison, *There's Always Tomorrow*, Farrar & Rinehart, Inc., New York, 1935, p. 32.

<sup>50</sup> H. A. L. Fisher, *An Unfinished Autobiography*, Oxford University Press, London, 1940, p. 2.

<sup>51</sup> Hughes, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-20.



written thank-you note;<sup>52</sup> the uncle who always wanted to help, but who instead got in everyone's way;<sup>53</sup> the pastor who invariably turned up on housecleaning day;<sup>54</sup> the members of the clergyman's congregation who felt free to drop in at any time and comment on the behavior of his children;<sup>55</sup> the man who *would* appear just at mealtime—all of these inspired in the families of the writers the same feeling of conspiracy against them that drew the members of the family, for a time and on occasion, closer together.

*The Guest May Be a Source of Anecdotes and Cue Words That Become Part of Any Family's Common Heritage.*

W. B. Maxwell's family had a word all their own. They would say, "May I Bynge you?" and would speak of being "Bynged." To outsiders it was just nonsense, but to the Maxwells it was full of meaning. It was coined from the name of a man, Mr. Bynge, who often stayed through dinner but would not share the family meal; he therefore sat in a corner and watched every mouthful his hosts ate, until the custom became annoying. Mr. Maxwell says that his own children use this word and know its connotation, but probably have no idea whence it came.<sup>56</sup> Cue words like this, that have no meaning to others but which instantly recall to the minds of the members some commonly shared experience, are rich possessions of family life. Guests, at least those in the homes of these autobiographers, seem to supply a good share of such words.

The words "Sniff, Sniff, Sniffin" sent the Carter family into raucous laughter. They recalled the fact that Mrs. Carter could never remember the names of the men her husband brought home. She had to supply herself with some associated word, and then usually made an awful mistake when she addressed the guest. But when Mr. Sniffin was about to call, the cry "Sniff, Sniff, Sniffin" caused a crises of irrepressible childish chuckles at the table that wrote the words down in family history.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 95-96.

<sup>53</sup> Selma Lagerlof, *Memories of My Childhood* (tr. by Velma Swameton Howard), Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc., New York, 1934, pp. 181-184.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 149-152.

<sup>55</sup> John Andrew Rice, *I Came Out of the Eighteenth Century*, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1942, pp. 45-46.

<sup>56</sup> Maxwell, *op. cit.*, pp. 22-27.

<sup>57</sup> John Franklin Carter, *The Rectory Family*, Coward-McCann, Inc., New York, 1937, pp. 69-75.

"Most appropriate, most appropriate" became part of the heritage of one family; they recalled the words which a visitor always used in reference to a dessert called "Poor Man's Pudding," which he was served at table.<sup>58</sup> "I'll try a little goose" invariably provided a family laugh in a home where the clergyman answered thus, even after he had already had five or six servings of the goose.<sup>59</sup> These words from childhood have been remembered by grown men and women and included in their life stories as cues for the recall of cherished experiences shared in their family life.

#### A FURTHER NOTE ON THE USE OF AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL MATERIAL

In view of other discussions of the use of autobiographical material in studying behavior and personality development, further comment suggested by its use in the present study may be in order. Four distinct values seem to inhere in this specific experience.

First, it has a "prospector" value; that is to say, it can be used to reveal the presence of "ore," which obviously is the first step in mining and refining it. It will be recalled that, in the present study, 117 out of the 200 authors referred to guests. Two hundred and thirty-two times these writers chose to delineate entertaining guests at home as moments of consequence in their early family histories. This certainly would serve to indicate that here is a subject significant enough to deserve further study. Not only the presence but also the richness of the "ore" is implied in these facts.

Second, the use of autobiographical material in the present study suggests specific leads for investigation, and it does so in two ways. In the first place, the authors mention a wide variation of guest influence, ranging all the way from the bringing out of the best tablecloth to the eruption of serious conflict between parent and child. In the second place, the kinds of experiences remembered during the visits of guests were common to many of these writers, so that they could be grouped in different categories according to their special kind of influence. In other words, this reveals preponderances, or areas of concentration.

Third, it is highly significant that all this information is derived from sources unrelated to the present study, and compiled without

<sup>58</sup> M. A. De Wolfe Howe, *A Venture in Remembrance*, Little, Brown and Company, Boston, 1941, p. 28.

<sup>59</sup> Shane Leslie, *The Film of Memory*, Michael Joseph, Ltd., London, 1938, p. 23.

reference to the particular interests of the present project. No organized research unit suggested the subject of guests or their role in personality development to the authors of these autobiographies. In this sense, the information furnished is both objective and spontaneous. For the uses indicated above, this makes it particularly valuable.

A fourth possible value is that, for the most part, the persons furnishing the autobiographical case material have had some experience and facility in expressing their ideas. They write well and verbalize readily—at least in comparison with people not so trained, from whom most material bearing upon behavior problems must be secured. Furthermore, they have had experience in thinking through the processes of human development and expressing them effectively, which is one of the basic requirements in writing an acceptable autobiography. It must be admitted that this involves also a possible defect, as far as the scientific value of the material is concerned, for it may result in a striving for effective expression, possibly at the risk of truthfulness. In writing human material, there is at times the temptation to add “the fictional touch.” By way of defense, it might be said that this would be less true in recalling childhood impressions of family guests than in certain other areas of life.

#### GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ON CONTEMPORARY CASE MATERIAL

The final analysis of the contemporary case documents will not be available for some time, but sufficient progress has been made with them to warrant the presentation of certain observations and conclusions by way of supplementing the completed study of the autobiographical material, and these are given in summary form. First to be considered are certain general observations on the case material.

1. In terms of family interaction as a whole, the arrival of a guest brings new personnel into the family group. This means the introduction of new factors into the interactive relationships of the family. As the interactive process continues henceforth, all the members are affected. Their interactive relationship can never be the same again, which implies that the persons involved will be different. It is similar to adding a new chemical to an existing chemical solution: things happen, and a new compound is formed. It is well to remember in this connection that the historic conception of the family as a domestic community, shared through the centuries by such students as Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas, and others, included the idea of the larger concentric

circle of the household group, and that in this the guest was an integral even if temporary part.<sup>60</sup>

2. Another outstanding impression gained from the study as a whole is the importance of family experiences with guests as source material for the learning process that goes on within the family, with particular reference to its child members. In an earlier chapter it was pointed out that life in the family group is, for a child, a sort of laboratory process of experimentation in the field of behavior. In this process guests have a peculiar importance. They come into the home, generally with some, and often with the complete, acceptance by the parents. They are outsiders, yet less so than other persons. They constitute, in other words, a sort of intermediate stage between the child's confined family contacts and the more formal contacts with people from the world outside. Furthermore, they come to the child's attention on a distinctive plan. They are adults from the outside world who have the attractiveness of novelty, and often an interpretive coloring given them by the adults in the family group. Particularly is this true of the approved guest in upper-class homes, where family entertainment has a relatively selective character. That is to say, guests are invited into the home because the family wants them, and their contacts with children result from the conscious sanction of the parents.

From this it follows that guests often are the agents through which are brought into the home, and to the child's vivid attention, a consciousness of the variety of life and of different people, diverse ideas, contrasting mannerisms and interests. The case material shows that guests often introduce children to the first discussion of pressing public issues, or first present points of view other than those of the parents. One twelve-year-old boy interviewed had not known, before the arrival of certain guests, that there were persons who did not think well of Mr. Roosevelt as President; he was much surprised to learn this.

3. The elders in the family function, in large measure, as the manipulators of this use of guests in the learning process. This begins with the selection of the guests who come habitually to the home. How these may differ among families whose circumstances are relatively similar in many respects can be shown by the following contrast be-

<sup>60</sup> For certain expressions included in this summary I am indebted to Professors L. Guy Brown and Franz H. Mueller, whose discussions of my paper, "The Guest in the Family," at the meetings of the American Sociological Society, December 28, 1946, were highly stimulating.

tween the seven most frequent contacts with male guests of two boys before their tenth birthday. A's contacts, in order of frequency, were with an attorney, a judge, an attorney, a business executive, an attorney, a university professor, and a gentleman farmer. B's contacts, in order of frequency, were with a realtor, a salesman, an advertising solicitor, a sales manager, the owner of an electrical supply store, an automobile salesman, and a newspaper reporter. In both instances, the boys were in the habit of sitting about and listening to the conversation with these visitors. It must be obvious that, in the language used, as well as in the whole complex of ideas and allusions involved, these guests created wholly different situations in the home life and development of these two boys.

Again, parents often manage guest situations for their own conscious purpose. Guests with definite ideas on pertinent subjects are "drawn out" in front of the children. Conversations are often staged for specific purposes. Clever parents may be quite adroit about this. Guests "offer" advice about child rearing and adolescent behavior, or children are called upon to perform before them. The American fashion of having children "show off" before guests still persists, and the children are either thrilled or bored now as in colonial days. The coming of guests may serve as an opportunity or occasion for parents to impart to the child his conception of his role. The child may have been developing a certain pattern of activities, like helping the mother with the preparation of the meals. This may have been developing gradually. Then comes the important guest, and the mother puts into words what has been crystallizing, when she says to the visitor: "Helen is fast becoming mother's little helper." Further conversation ensues, with the result that both Helen and her mother become more aware of the role that has been in process of formation. Thus one hears constantly before guests and children such references as: "Mary is becoming quite a musician"; "Joe is our camper-outer; we never know where he is"; "Gloria has no interest in home work"; or "Bill is much interested in chicken raising."

Finally, after the guests have left, post-mortems follow. There may be analyses, comments, and evaluations concerning many things relating to the visitors: their behavior as guests, their occupations, plans of living, patterns of expenditures, or attitudes expressed. Sometimes this family appraisal may be made "in front of the children" and with their participation; often it proceeds without consciousness of their presence until Junior stops to inquire: "Daddy, why do you think Mr. Blank's

job is a racket?" In other words, parents may use guests as pawns in the child's learning process, or the same results may accrue as incidents in the family's accommodation to the guest.

4. The role of the guest in child development obviously varies a great deal from one family to another. Some of the differentiating factors can readily be identified. First is the size of the family. Children in small families tend to welcome guests much more than when there are a number of siblings and guests are taken more in their stride as part of the complex life of the household group. The only child in particular may be very happy and enthusiastic over guests who break the relative quietness of life in a small family. On the other hand, only children were observed in the course of the study whose possessive attitude toward the parents and the home led them to resent a guest as an intruding irritant.

Second, and closely related to the first factor, is the relative social accessibility or isolation of the family. In the latter case, the guest more often is a sparkling innovation or a breath of fresh air, whereas in the first situation the coming of a guest may just be another passing incident. The case of Ruth illustrates how the isolation of the family, together with other factors, creates a situation in which the child looks forward with great anticipation to the arrival of guests. Ruth lives in a country village containing about fifteen houses; it is almost thirty miles to the nearest town. She has one sister, seven years older. Her parents were 36 and 37 when she was born. Ruth says that neither of them is affectionate. "Guests in my house," she says, "were a grand and glorious occasion. I always looked forward to company for days ahead, and enjoyed every minute of their stay, except the few whom I disliked."

A third factor is the quality or tone of the personal relationships of the family which the guest enters. The case material includes some instances in which the intra-family relations were none too cordial, and the arrival of a guest led to an almost immediate increase in tensions. In several cases, the guest was the friend of one member of the family, which led to his reception by the other members with unfriendliness; in others, his arrival was the signal for the beginning of a series of rival maneuverings, the object of which was to tell him the different sides of family bickerings or to "capture" his loyalty. Tension and maneuvering of this kind may not always be recognized and assessed by the child at their true meaning, but they are nevertheless part of the family milieu,

sensed by the child and assimilated by him in various ways. Not infrequently, of course, guests reveal family tensions to the child, especially when they are relatives.

Fourth is the number of guests. Here, as in the economic realm, supply becomes a factor in the determination of value. Reference has already been made to the welcome extended to a guest in the relatively isolated home. Similar is the "feel" one finds in the well-managed upper-class family where there are considerable selection of guests and a definite limitation of their number. Guests in these homes are managed; they do not overrun the family. In contrast are those homes revealed by the study in which there are constant streams of visitors—all kinds of people for all kinds of purposes. The home partakes somewhat of the nature of New York's Grand Central Station. There is no privacy, particularly for the child; his main impression may be one of "neglect in the midst of plenty." Children in such homes often reveal considerable resentment against people, or a callous disregard of their presence. Gloria, at nineteen, recalls the "mob of visitors" who was always in her home because her parents considered extensive entertainment a business essential. Being an attractive child, with blonde curls and beautiful blue eyes, she was "dragged" constantly from her play and childhood pursuits to "show off" for the guests. This, too, her parents considered a business asset. Her resentment of all this took the form of an early marriage; an expressed desire to have no children, "at least for a while"; and the conscious selection of an apartment in which there was no space for the entertainment of guests. She referred, too, to her dislike of women and of large social gatherings. Several children of clergymen, who were included in the study, spoke resentfully or wistfully of this "overrunning" of their homes during childhood.

In contrast to such cases are those socially-minded families who entertain a great many guests and treat them with openhanded tolerance and generosity. The life of the family group shades almost imperceptibly into the life of the neighborhood. Here one senses a family of extroverts, whose life seems to be lived in the open, whose problems are talked over with whoever is about—and guests seem to be about most of the time.

This is perhaps the place to raise the question of the significance, to a child, of growing up in a home in which there are no guests. Such a lack, unless due to very unusual circumstances, could be indicative of the family's social status, or its social isolation, or the social attitudes

and personality traits of the parents. Some parents wish to be left alone, some are antagonistic to people, some feel self-sufficient, some are ignored. As far as the development of the children is concerned, two kinds of effects might be anticipated. One would be those resulting from the lack, for both parents and children, of the stimulating and broadening consequences of home contacts with other persons; the other, the intensification of the family interactive process because of its constant limitation within the family group. One cannot but speculate about the social development of many children who are only children or one of a pair and whose parents lead a life which precludes the presence of guests in the home. One is conscious here of the obvious absence of an important domestic dimension.

Fifth is the kind of relationship established between the guest and the child. Obviously many things are important in this connection, and some of them will be touched upon in subsequent pages; but two kinds of influences are clearly revealed in the case material. One has to do with the attitude of the guest toward children; the other, with the interests of the children. The attitude of the adult guest is particularly stressed in the material gathered from the young children. Their comments center constantly around certain types. There are the guests who "make over" the children unduly, until they shy away or become definitely antagonistic. "I don't take to you," said eight-year-old George to his mother's gushing visitor. Other guests ignore children, because they either do not like children or do not like their parents. Then there are the guests who fail to realize that children grow up and who treat William, who is now all of twelve, as if he were still in the diaper stage. Again, there are the guests who do not approve of the children's behavior, and show it in a variety of ways. Children apparently are quick to sense these attitudes; guests often make them vocally and patently clear. Unmarried friends of young married couples with children are particularly generous with advice about rearing children. Some guests are not content with giving advice, but proceed to corporal illustration. On the other hand, references are frequent to guests who understand children, are sympathetic to them, and treat them naturally and in keeping with their age. The range of guest attitudes toward children is wide, and their existence and particular nature are very real and very important to children.

Complementary to the attitudes of the guests are the interests of the children. Such interests are highly important because they determine



what Dollard and Miller have called the cues of the child,<sup>61</sup> that is, how he will respond to the guest. A simple illustration will suffice. Included in the case material is the account of the visit of a well-known novelist to two different homes with children. In the first home lives a twelve-year-old boy. His interests are wholly mechanical, and what small interest he showed in the author apparently grew out of the fact that he owned a large power mower which cut the grass on his estate. In the second home was a fourteen-year-old daughter who read extensively, including some published stories by the author. Her interest in this guest was enthusiastic and almost boundless. Obviously, the respective attitudes of these two children reflected their specific interests. It is these two—the attitude of the guest and the interest of the child—which unite to create the *modus vivendi* between guest and child on the basis of which specific influences tend to operate.

Finally, the more one peruses the case material, the more one is impressed with the fact that the role of the guest varies with the child's age and stage of development. Provided a satisfactory relationship has been established, the child tends to take from the guest according to his need. Rosamond Lehmann, the novelist, grasped at the underlying principle when she wrote: "When we are children, we do not see the people close to us as themselves—only as our need for them, our habit of them. When something happens to make us realize that they have an enormous life going on apart from us, we feel rather resentful."<sup>62</sup>

In the early days of the child's life, the guests to which he is exposed tend to influence him in an impressionistic rather than a rational sort of way. Some vivid impression—a spectacular act, a striking word or story, the warmth of a smile—constitutes the child's recollection. Kay is seventeen years old. She recalls that when she was about four, a guest came to her home and in the course of the conversation referred to some man who drank himself to death. From this remark she developed in her mind the picture of a man standing near a store and drinking water until he burst. This scene, constantly recalled as time went on, became virtually a nightmare to her.

At a subsequent stage, perhaps from the tenth to the fourteenth year, the child may not be much interested in family guests. This is

<sup>61</sup> John Dollard and Neal E. Miller, *Social Learning and Imitation*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1941, p. 21.

<sup>62</sup> Rosamond Lehmann, *The Ballad and the Source*, Reynal & Hitchcock, New York, 1945, p. 100.

the age of shyness and withdrawal from the company of adults. Children are gawky and awkward; because of constant association, parents show no awareness of this, but guests are less successful in their dissembling. It is now that children rebel against appearing before them. When the visitor appears, the child retires to his room or leaves the house. The process of social weaning has begun, and in the earlier phases of it guests are part of the adult-family personnel of whom the child tends to be rather critical.

As the child grows older and becomes concerned with attaining adolescent and adult status, the most frequently voiced comments about guests relate to the age and developmental status which the guest projects upon the child. These comments fall into two groups. First, and more frequent, are those which criticize guests for not realizing the present age of the younger members of the family. "He thinks I am still a child." "So this is the baby. My goodness." "'How big you've gotten,' she said over and over, and then ignored me the rest of the evening." "He never notices me when he talks, as though I still were a child." In contrast are the comments of appreciation because guests accept children at their own conception. "He treats me naturally." "He doesn't act as if I were a baby." Few of the case documents of younger persons are free of comments of one or the other kind. No other aspect of the behavior of a guest seems more important to the teen-ager.

In later adolescence, and with the transition to adulthood, boys and girls become more interested again in family guests, but perhaps on a more rational and selective basis. In this stage there is a growing consciousness of social behavior, and guests are evaluated with reference to the emerging needs of the younger members of the family. Most of the comments now refer to the guest's social graces or their lack. "He was a most interesting person." "I loved to hear him talk." "She had lots of pep and would pull all of us out of the doldrums." "He was full of fun and stories about Oklahoma where he came from." And there are statements like these: "He forgot to act his age." "He [the minister] always played and sang, 'There is a tavern in the town,' which isn't exactly a hymn." "He thinks he is always right, the big blabber-mouth." "She is such a complaining person." "The ham he had promised for seven years finally arrived." "She always monopolized the conversation." It is in this stage that the most critical as well as the most appreciative comments upon the social behavior of guests appear, again

an apparent identification of the prevailing interests of the youths in the family.

By way of conclusion, reference should be made to the general value of the material obtained from children and younger persons. Their comments on persons and situations are not only simple and direct, but often naively penetrating. One wonders whether children's descriptions are frequently not of greater value than those of adults, even if the latter are trained observers. Adults often seem to be handicapped by words and ideas and interpretations which come between them and the facts. When a child sees something, he tells what he sees in simple words; when an adult sees it, he tells about it in terms of the background of his own experience. It is well to remember that magicians find children and country yokels the most difficult to deceive.

#### SOME SPECIFIC CONCLUSIONS ON THE CONTEMPORARY CASE MATERIAL

##### *Verification of the Autobiographical Conclusions.*

All the specific conclusions drawn from the autobiographical material presented earlier in this chapter are further emphasized by the other case documents. This is more particularly true of the histories secured from adults; this is natural, since the autobiographical statements, too, came from adults. One difference, however, is apparent. The authors of the autobiographies, having experience and facility in self-analysis and expression, more readily verbalize their experiences and insights than the other persons interviewed, who yield their conclusions by inference rather than in the more direct statement. And yet one finds striking flashes of insight from very young persons included in the study. Selecting, for example, the first conclusion from the autobiographical material that the guest becomes a standard for the measure of the parent, one finds Vivian, aged twelve, pointing out that everyone who visits at their house "treats Daddy with great respect, except Betty (aged 27) and Mrs. Teller." Similarly, Dorothy at thirteen tells how her father "always makes a fool of himself when that blonde woman comes to the house."

##### *The Guest as the Personification of Traits, Occupations, and Personality Types.*

One of the most frequent references, direct or implied, is to the guests as the personification of some trait, occupation, or personality

type. The child's conception of the guest is usually rather simple and is expressed in terms of some unitary summary, such as the doctor, that silly woman, the complainer, a good storyteller, etc. Often it is this one trait or characteristic that stands out, and on the basis of which the guest is favored or not. In the adolescent stage, guests with some one or more desired traits are set up as a model. Helen, past thirteen, when asked to tell about the guests in her home, placed Peggy at the top of the list. When asked what it was about Peggy that attracted her, she called attention to her good "sportsmanship and her friendliness." Helen, who is described by her associates as a very friendly girl and noted for her sportsmanship, said that she tried to "model herself after Peggy."

In the descriptive accounts secured from younger men and women, chiefly of university age, guests are identified generally in terms of relatively simple social personality types. Those most commonly found include the following: wives who tyrannized their husbands, couples who made a real marriage with little in the way of worldly goods, well-groomed career women without an ounce of maternal warmth in them, little wrinkled old ladies of youthful spirit and animated conversation, rollicking bachelors who took on sobriety with married life, relatives who fought each other and fawned on the uncle who had a large fortune, good sports in adversity, persons who had little or nothing to complain about but did so unceasingly, fair-weather visitors, those who used you for their own selfish ends, self-absorbed bores, conversational extroverts, "snobs and democrats," those who never imposed upon hospitality and those who always did, the pretenders, and the genuine.

Boys come early to note the occupations of guests, and how particular occupations are regarded by their parents and the other guests. What happens in the home before a guest's arrival may be the initial part of a subtle but effective process of occupational selection. Mother may slave in the kitchen, extra help may be hired, father is concerned over the preparations. Then comes Dr. Thomas, the family physician. Everything that happens impresses Junior with the fact that Dr. Thomas is an important person and that his visit is an event in the life of the family. Perhaps Mother or one of the other guests drops a few judicious words about Junior becoming a doctor like Dr. Thomas. The prospect of becoming a doctor brings a warming glow; an occupational choice has been formed. Years later, the young interne may say he cannot remember when he decided to become a physician.

James K, at 38, recalls that one of the best-remembered guests who

came to his home when he was a boy was an attorney. Apparently he was a man of considerable ability and reputation. The visual memories that James retains are of him as the central person in a group of men who gathered around him to listen and ask questions. Everyone, he remembers, treated this lawyer with great deference, and he served frequently as the final arbiter in arguments that arose among the men. James is in the insurance business now, but is going to law school in the evenings and hopes to be admitted to the bar soon. It has been his lifelong ambition, he says, to be a lawyer.

*The Guest as the Personification of Pet Aversions and Dislikes.*

One aspect of the foregoing process reserved for separate discussion is the guest's personification of pet aversions and dislikes. Just as there are guests who impressed children so favorably that they accepted them as models to follow, so there are those who came to be identified as the living image of what the children wanted to avoid being.

In a good many cases, these dislikes involved some one or more mannerisms of the guest which the child or the family, or both, found offensive—garrulousness, incessant complaining, inconsiderateness, insincerity, grasping manner, etc. Grace C, the most feminine-appearing woman interviewed, will serve as an illustration. In talking over the role of family guests, Grace said that two guests stood out above all the others. One was a woman who had been a counselor in the camp to which her sister had gone for the summer. This woman had a very mannish appearance; her hair was cut like a man's and she wore mannish clothes. Apparently, Grace's sister was fond of this woman, a fact which Grace resented. Whenever she came to the house, Grace would leave the room as soon as possible. Meanwhile, another guest who came frequently was described by Grace as being very feminine; she wore feminine clothes and had very feminine mannerisms. Grace said that this woman was very beautiful and treated her like a grown-up, and that her visits were happy occasions.

A number of the persons interviewed singled out some religiously inclined person—the preacher, a missionary, or a moralist—as their pet dislike. Such people are described frequently as unattractive in appearance, tactless in manner, and casual in their attitude toward children. One young man was so annoyed by the recurrent visits of a solicitor for a missionary journal that when he was old enough to go to work, one of his first expenditures was to pay for a ten-year sub-

scription to this journal, thus making it unnecessary for this man to call at his home. The case of John Turner is interesting in this connection. John was 47 years of age at the time of the interview. When the guest study was discussed with him, he told the following story, which apparently he had thought about a good deal in times past:

John grew up as an only child in a family in which the leaders of his church came to visit at the house many times. These religious guests made an unfavorable impression upon him. He spoke of three repeated visitors. First was the preacher, who seemed to be interested mostly in his mother and other women that were in the house. He apparently was rather feminine in his manner and feminine in his friendships. John says he acted consistently in a silly manner when he was in their home and acted consistently in a formal and pompous manner when functioning in the church. The second man who came to the house even more frequently was the male soloist of the choir. This man made repeated advances by way of sexual practices to the boy. When singing in church, this man would put on the most pious look, "singing with the voice of angels" as John put it. In fact, John can remember a time when he was being given instruction in masturbation by this singer in the barn. In several minutes the latter was asked into the house to sing religious hymns, which he did in the most pious manner. The third of the guests was a member of the clergy whose position in his church compares to that of bishop in some churches. This "bishop" had great gifts of oratory and would move his congregation deeply with his sermons. John noticed, however, that, on his repeated visits to their house, his conversation referred almost wholly to church politics, with frequent expressions of hatred against other dignitaries in the church organization. These contacts covered John's life from about the 8th to the 18th year. He is quite positive that the effect of these contacts was to create in him a pronounced scepticism and cynicism concerning religious matters. These three men personified religion and the church to him as a boy. He saw them off stage as guests in his home and what he saw impressed him most unfavorably. John says that a lifelong conflict has resulted from this early experience. Since he is older, with a devout religious wife and children and perhaps by natural inclination, he thinks that he should go to church with the rest of the family. He would like to do this. He has made a number of efforts to do so. Always, however, he is confronted with the memory of these experiences and he says that he sits in church and speculates on what rascals the preacher, soloists and other church officials are. He thinks that this early experience with these religious guests has given him a lifelong bias against religious matters.

A third series of pet dislikes seem to grow out of the visits of relatives and the bickerings that attended their presence. In a number of cases, strong resentments developed against relatives in general, leading to resolutions to avoid them in later life. Robert K was such a person.

His father was one of twelve children; his mother, one of thirteen. Both families visited back and forth a good deal. A series of rather difficult family problems seems to have arisen during Robert's coming of age, and he "grew heartily and irrevocably sick of the whole business." Now, at thirty-two, and married for nine years, he has had two visits from relatives and has made one such visit himself.

*The Role of the Dramatic Impression.*

In working over the source material of this study, one is impressed over and over again with the great importance of some striking, dramatic impression made by the guest upon the child. This is the same technique which the skillful criminal lawyer has long followed in dealing with juries: that one big impression, dramatically staged, may offset the accumulated weight of more prosaic details. A considerable number of persons who were included in this study emphasize, often to what seems a disproportionate extent, the importance of some one guest who was colorful and intriguing or had some outstanding feature or trait—the lawyer, with "the brusque manner and large head who always dominated our household"; "the perfectly groomed and poised woman, whose every little movement I watched and tried to emulate"; the handsome "singer-actor whose gleaming teeth were responsible for the faithfulness with which I brushed my teeth for years"; the actor with "the flowing tie and the story of the lion-taming act"; the mayor of the town who "got down on the floor and played with me." By way of contrast, another good proportion of these subjects singled out the guest who dramatized their dislikes and ever afterwards served as the personification of all that was to be avoided. As the flashing light reveals more sharply the figure against the sky, so the vivid colorful guest, with his glamour and his dramatic grip upon the child, brings into bold relief the model that is henceforth to be accepted or rejected.

*The Guest as a Practice Person.*

Another phase of the guest-child relationship is the role of the guest as a practice person for the growing child. Since relationships between the child and his parents are more or less crystallized, it is the guest who offers the child an opportunity to try out procedures in meeting new situations. Mary, for example, has been told by her mother how to greet visitors, how to make introductions, how to improvise con-

versations. From the movie magazines and other sources she is learning about being glamorous and interesting and intriguing. Comes now the guest, and here is someone on whom to try out her newly acquired techniques. Furthermore, the guest offers the challenge and lure of new situations. The more one appreciates this particular aspect of the young person's interest in a family guest, the more can one understand the nature and intensity of the child's reaction to many guests. With some, the new techniques have a chance to function, and do so successfully. Those guests "treat me like a grown-up"; with others, there is no opportunity and failure ensues. It is evident from the implications, and also from the expressions in the case material, that one of the most rankling memories is that of the guest who ignores the young boy or girl. Several varieties of this ignoring process are mentioned repeatedly—the guest who "just doesn't notice you," the one who is laudatory and "sickeningly sweet," the one who greets you effusively and then with an impatient expectancy assumes your prompt disappearance, and again the one who acts as though you were five instead of fifteen.

A "crush" on an older person of the opposite sex appears a number of times in the case material. Many boys and girls become interested in guests of the opposite sex, sometimes seriously, perhaps more often in a playful, practice sort of way. It would seem that girls are more willing to speak of this than boys; yet, on direct questioning, many men admit having been enamored, while in the adolescent stage, of women guests, often much older than themselves. Marion's story, told with frankness, serves as an illustration of the "crush" on an older male guest.

When I was about eight years old, I fell in love for the first time, with a lad who frequently visited my family. He must have been about twenty, a handsome fellow, and one who liked children and knew how to interest them. When he came, I wore my heart in my eyes. He neither took advantage of nor laughed at my affection. He gently called me his little fiancée and said that when I grew up we might be married. With me it was deadly serious. I told all my young friends that I was engaged, and meant it.

After I had been "engaged" for some time, I can't remember how long it was, Raymond came to the house one day and, while the family was assembled, looked at me in such a way as to say, "I hope you will understand" and told us that he was going to be married. I fled from the room, and went to my bedroom and sobbed. Various members of my family ascended to me and started to tease me. That's what I got for being so



"forward" with men. Did I really think that Raymond could be serious about a baby like me? Etc., etc.

Then Raymond arrived and shooed them all away. He dried my tears, sat me down, and told me the facts—not of life—but of love. He told me that boys and girls love many different people before they grow up enough to find the one they want to marry, and that it was normal and nothing to be ashamed of nor to hide. Loving, he said, was the important thing, not being loved. Sincerity in showing one's feelings was what would make one grow into a person who would be very much loved.

Raymond's lecture to me gave me a new slant on the way to behave toward the opposite sex as I grew older and came to know boys of my own age. No one else had ever given me such direction. And from my own family I would only have gathered the notion that the proper behavior for young ladies was a flirtatious coyness, resulting in the wrapping around the finger of any eligible male, and with no compromise of affection on the part of the girl. Because I trusted Raymond, and his philosophy suited me, I adopted it,—to the disgust, many times, of my family. So far, I seem to have gained much, and gotten into no trouble, as a result of this infant "engagement."

### *The Parents Emerge as Adults.*

In the ordinary course of family life, the child sees the adults in the family group function primarily in the role of parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts, and the like, and he comes to know them primarily in that relationship. This is particularly true of the parents. The presence of a guest often changes this situation completely. The parents now function as adults in relation to other adults, with the children as witnesses to the change in roles.

The case material brings out many phases in this process. Some subjects speak of their parents as coming to life, changing from drab to interesting and colorful persons. The whole family scene may change, as if the canvas of life were suddenly splashed with vivid colors. Edgar C, now 31, recalls that the conversation in his home usually was rather trite and commonplace, with no reference to public or international affairs. But when guests came, his father would wake up as out of a dream, and actually sparkle in his discussion of public events. He remembers that he would look at his father in amazement and think of him as an entirely different sort of person. Gradually it dawned on him that his mother never participated in these talks, would even act bored while they were going on, and would at times seek to divert the conversation away from these topics. As time went on, he began first to

sense and then to see clearly that his father, a brilliant and widely read man, had married a rather domestic woman who had no intellectual interests whatever.

Apparently, in a number of cases, the children, seeing this transformation in their parents and in their relations with each other that occurred with the arrival of guests, realized for the first time the boredom or strain that existed between their parents. Often this came as a by-product of conversation between the adults—the mother complaining about her inadequate kitchen allowance; the father, about her unwise expenditures; the mother dropping some remarks about his interest in other women; he suggesting that if she stayed at home sometimes she could get some sewing done for the children.

The revealing significance of conversations between parents and guests is emphasized a good deal, with frequent references to the fact that they became "less adorned" than when the family talked by itself, that the father swore, that the mother told a risqué story, and that "they" said all kinds of things in front of the child. Eva's case is an interesting illustration. Eva was five when a college mate came to call on her mother. As the two women talked, Eva was relegated to the next room, supposedly out of earshot. The next day, Eva suddenly said to her mother: "Frances, you are a g— d— old nut," for which she was promptly and severely punished. It was not until weeks later that her mother realized that the classmate had made that remark to her, whereupon both women had laughed heartily. Eva, who had heard the remark and noted her mother's laughter, repeated it the next day, obviously to call forth the same happy laughter from her mother.

One fundamentally important phase of this whole process is that the child sees the parent in a new light, as an adult in relationship with other adults. Thus, as a by-product of the guest's coming to the home, the child learns the real nature of his parents, often for the first time. At times, he gathers from the behavior of guests his first appreciation of the excellent repute and high status of his parents; but more often the comments are far from complimentary. The mother is seen as a social climber, and parents are seen pretending in ways that the children realize are obvious falsehoods. Several children spoke of their parents telling lies in front of guests, and when they (the children) corrected the misstatements, punishment was meted out to them. Or the children were instructed to deceive guests about certain matters, either through positive misrepresentation or by withholding the truth.

"Don't tell Daddy about that man who was here." "Don't tell Mother's age." "Don't tell what we paid for my coat." At least one father, a widower, who was entertaining women guests, called his nine-year-old daughter aside to say, "Don't call me Daddy when there are people here." Again, children are warned not to tell guests what their father says about Jews. The father, a lawyer, talks a good deal at home about young Jewish lawyers and their professional practices; but Frances, the daughter, is repeatedly warned never to refer to this when guests are in the home. And there are the parents, frequently found among the so-called intelligentsia, who develop a pose of sophistication whenever guests appear, which may reveal them in a new or exaggerated light to their children. Cynthia's mother, for example, always refers, when company is present, to Cynthia's pet dog as the bitch, and as acting bitchy. She does not do so when there are no guests.

By far the most frequent complaint of children about their parents' behavior in front of guests concerns their "showing off." Here is a patriarchal Italian father who insists that his children march up to him in front of guests to ask for money to go to the movies. First he subjects them to a lengthy catechizing, after which the money is given with a grand flourish of generosity or a long preachment on economy, each intended for the benefit of the guests. The disciplining of children before guests is common in practice and in the complaints of the case material. There is Esther, whose father constantly made fun of her "in front of company." He would ask her to play the piano for the guests, or to read a poem; then, Esther having done so, he would criticize her performance or ridicule it until, time after time, she rushed from the room in tears. If she goes out with a boy friend and comes home after 9:30, her father insults her and the boy, regardless of who else is in the house. Esther hates her father but has a "guilty feeling about this, because nice girls don't hate their fathers."

The cases of William and Helen illustrate a number of aspects of parent-child relationships involved in these exhibitionist practices of parents.

William is a man now 46 years old. He speaks frankly about his relationship with his father and admits that it has been of continuing animosity between his father and himself since he was ten years old. William has a considerable gift of clarity in analysis. He traces this animosity back to scenes which began before the tenth year. These scenes were all scenes in which guests were visiting at the home and the father on these occasions

would change from a fairly mild and reasonable father to a nervous quick-tempered show-off. He still remembers that his father would be very harsh, would administer corporal punishment in front of guests, would ridicule him for mistakes which he made and would even concoct situations so as to make him appear as a ridiculous child. He is still very clear in his recollection of an occasion when he was trying very consciously to help his father finish a piece of work in which they were engaged when the guest arrived. Up until the arrival of the guest, the father had been appreciative of the child's help. Now, there was a complete change, the father ridiculing the son about his awkwardness and stupidity in what he was doing, all the time laughing and smiling to the guest over this object of ridicule who was working in front of him. It is suggestive that, thirty-six years later, William remembers clearly many of the details of these scenes. He recalls how at first he was embarrassed and ashamed before the guest, how he blamed himself for being awkward and not doing his work well. It was only as time went on and there were repeated instances of such a change in the father's attitude that William's attitude changed to one of contempt for the father. Several times in discussing the matter he emphasized the fact that he lost respect for his father at this time and saw him as an adult willing to show off at his little son's expense in front of guests. William's insight into all this was confirmed by the mother who also understood it and upbraided the father for his attitude and conduct at such times. Apparently, too, the father would delight in posing as a rigorous disciplinarian when guests were at the house. William would have to go to bed earlier than was customary, he would be allowed fewer privileges, he must behave more stiffly than customary. For violations of these matters, punishment would be swift and immediate before the guest. Such punishments were corporal and verbal, and the verbal castigations were of the kind that smarted particularly before guests. As William became older this animosity toward the father was confirmed and hardened. He remembers turning on his father when he grew older, with physical combat between the two. These combats always left William with conflicting emotional reactions. On the one hand he was ashamed of fighting physically with his father and on the other hand he had the very definite feeling that his father deserved anything that William could give him.

Helen's story is in sharp contrast to William's. Her experiences were confined to her mother. Her mother seems to have been a nagging parent ordinarily, who indulged in a long flow of words upon numerous occasions throughout the day in her efforts to direct and discipline her daughter Helen. Helen remembers considerable boredom with her mother's lengthy harangues. The coming of guests changed the picture. The mother became an interesting person, alert, entertaining, conciliatory, forgiving and understanding. She would deal with Helen in the presence of guests the way Helen wanted always to be treated—as a young adult. Her commands were single sentences, couched as suggestions on such occasions, instead of the lengthy harangues which she ordinarily received. As time went on

the mother became quite sugary and flowery in her treatment of Helen in front of guests. Gradually Helen became aware of this duality in her mother's nature, and confusion gave way to a certain disrespect in which one finds certain elements of good-natured contempt. It was during this time that Helen's mother ceased to be regarded by Helen as an effective parent. Helen has never broken with her mother. She has a good deal of liking for her; she simply remembers now as a grown adult her mother's weakness—the weakness of a certain pretense before guests.

Both of these stories pose a very definite problem in parent-child relationships. It is the problem of the child who discovers that his parents are quite different from what he believed them to be as a young child. It is the crisis of the child's disillusionment with his parent. This comes as a shocking discovery to many children, sometimes suddenly, sometimes gradually and with extreme reluctance. Apparently the effect upon the child varies a great deal, ranging from a tremendous psychic shock on the one extreme to a somewhat cynical discovery of an incidental fact on the other. This clearly needs further investigation by the student of child personality development.

Another rather basic aspect of the parents' emergence in the role of adult involves a comparison, in the eyes of the child, of the parent with other adults. That children are constantly making such comparisons is evidenced in a number of ways. In interviews with the younger age group, questions about guests continually called forth statements such as "he was taller than my father," "she was not as fat as Grandma," "she wore her hair like sister Jo," etc. From physical comparisons of such kinds, it is an easy step to an appreciation of other contrasts—clothes, grooming, manner of speech, range of interests, complex of attitudes. Most children approach such situations emotionally tilted toward the parent; and if he compares favorably with the guests, children are quick to note it, apparently often with comforting assurance. On the other hand, discussion of this matter with various children indicates that often the child's first feelings of antagonism to, or shame of, the parent appear with the advent of a guest. It is then that so many parents seem to fail their children, through uncomplimentary comparisons, through the discovery that the parents are not wholly and exclusively concerned with them, by seeing the parent in an adult role inconsistent with his parent role, or by indicating to the guest a conception of the child different from that ordinarily revealed. Family guests seem to serve like a turning table which reveals the parent to the child and the child to the parent in new, and often

strange and startling, lights. The story of Florence is interesting in this connection.

"I don't remember," said Florence, "the guests that came to my house so much for themselves as for the ways in which they gave me new pictures of my parents, or strengthened the ideas that I already had about them. I learned very early that when guests came to visit my mother it was the time for her to reveal and laugh over all the serious little confidences that my older brother had given to her, things that I had heard her promise never to mention to a soul. I was glad that these visitors had given me that chance to find her out. Otherwise I might have learned to confide in her, with the same result.

"I remember one friend who came for a visit asking for my father. I said that he was out but that my mother was at home. 'I'm sorry your father isn't here,' the friend said. 'I like to see him. He doesn't say much, but the kind of smile that he wears on his face makes me feel that in his home there is all the welcome in the world for a friend.' One time, when I was about twelve and in the pimply stage, I came home from school and passed the living room door just as a friend of mother's, who was a favorite of mine, asked Mother how I was. 'Fine,' Mother answered, 'and as homely as a hedge-fence.' I couldn't escape unseen. My parent laughed boisterously, and said that she wouldn't for the world have said that if she had known I was at home. The next time that friend came to visit, she made a point of telling me that I looked exactly as my mother did when she was my age.

"I can remember, too, deliberately using the presence of guests as a way to get even with my mother. She prided herself on her children's behavior, and exclaimed against women who couldn't control their offspring. One day, when the mother of two model children was visiting our home, I took the opportunity of making myself as obnoxious as possible. I can remember getting down on the floor and rolling from one end of the room to the other between the chairs they were sitting on. I interrupted every conversation I could. I knocked a marble statuette down from its pedestal. I made the afternoon miserable and brought a fairly speedy end to the visit. I knew full well what would happen afterward, but for a time I knew my mother was helpless, and it was worth it."

### *Guests as a Preview of Adult Life.*

The arrival of guests, usually adults, results in the establishment of a segment of adult life in the home, in which the child plays the role of participant observer. Several distinct aspects of this process are identified in the case material.

First, the child sees adults in action. "You see what grown-ups are like," commented one eighteen-year-old. Here, in other words, is a preview of the behavior types and patterns of adult society. Adults are

on exhibition, and the child's reactions are usually positive, and at times far from complimentary. Guests in the home personify adult traits and the types one will encounter in later life. They afford the child a transitional experience preparatory to later full-time adult living, and one senses from the material contributed by the younger children especially how wise parents utilize a guest as a device for the social education of the child. With few exceptions, in which the children seemed overly impressed by high status or good looks, they based their judgments on fundamentals rather than on superficialities. Most frequently they could "see through" adults. Sometimes they were helped in their analyses by post-guest discussions with their parents, but when the latter for some ulterior motive tried to prejudice the child's already arrived-at estimate, they usually failed.

Second, the guest serves as an agent for passing on certain phases of the larger group culture to the child. Several aspects of this can be identified. First is the guest who is brought into the home to strengthen some parent-selected aspect of the culture. This was evident in the case of Josephine, who, at sixteen, was reluctant to fall in with the family plan for university training. Josephine, steeped in the movie magazines, was of the opinion that a college education was only for girls who lacked the charms necessary for women to achieve their ends. Her mother, alert to the situation, invited to the home, for repeated visits, the very glamorous daughter of a friend who had won two prizes for scholarship at the neighboring university. The guest entertained Josephine at her sorority house and at several university affairs. Josephine now is eager to go to the university.

Another is the case where the guest is of another race or nationality. One of the guests at Helen's home was a Chinese student. Helen remembered him because he wore Chinese dress and taught her some Chinese words. After his visit, she read *Moment in Peking*, *Dragon Seed*, *Our Family*, and *My Country and My People*. She took two dollars of her own money and sent it as a contribution to Chinese relief. She wishes that she might visit China. She still reads everything about China that she can secure.

Other aspects involve the entertainment of guests from other regions in the United States, the revelation through guests of social and economic differences of which the child was not aware before, the identification of marital problems and the various sexual involvements outside the marriage bond. The guest, in other words, is not merely a person,

but a cultural product, and he brings into the home his cultural background as surely as he does his clothes and the possible dust on his shoes.

#### SUMMARY

1. This chapter is based upon an original study of the role of the guest in child development. The study includes 400 case records, 200 of which are autobiographies; 40 were obtained from children ranging from 10 to 15 years; 100 are autobiographical accounts from young people between 18 and 23 years of age; and 60 are records of interviews with adult persons, chiefly of middle age.

2. The published autobiographies emphasize the following conclusions: (a) The guest is a standard for measuring parents; (b) he is a measure of family status; (c) he extends the horizon of beliefs and customs; (d) he is a measure of the consistency of adults in precept and practice; (e) he serves as a medium for teaching certain rules of social behavior; (f) he may change the normal family regimen; (g) through their discussions with each other and with parents, guests may be an intellectual stimulus to children; (h) they may produce conflicts and increase family tensions; (i) the guest may unite the family in a mild conspiracy against him; and (j) he may be a source of anecdotes and cue words that become part of the family's common heritage.

3. Four distinct values inhere in the use of autobiographical material. First, it reveals the presence, and to some extent the richness, of the "ore"; second, through the areas of concentration revealed, it suggests specific leads for investigation; third, the information obtained is both objective and spontaneous; and, fourth, the material is usually well thought out and well written.

4. General observations on the contemporary case material emphasize that the guest adds a new factor to the family interactive process, furnishes source material in the learning process for the child, and is manipulated by the parents in this learning process. Obviously, the role of the guest varies a great deal from one family to another, depending upon the size of the family, its relative accessibility or isolation, the nature of intra-family relationships, the number of guests, their relationship with the child and family, the interests of the child, and his age and general development.

5. Some specific conclusions on the contemporary case material include: the importance of the guest as the personification of some trait,



occupation, or personality type; the similar personification of pet aversions and dislikes; the role of the dramatic impression; the guest as a practice person; the emergence of the parent as an adult in the eyes of the child; and the role of the guest in presenting a preview of adult life.

## Domestic Servants and Child Development



Present in a large proportion of homes, and participating within limitations in the domestic routine, is the family servant. Although thus far unhonored in scientific studies, the servant is a definite part of the child's family world, operating in a relatively silent, subtle, but rather pervasive manner, and playing a role in his social development. This chapter is a pioneer attempt to analyze the role of the domestic servant in family situations, with particular reference to the young child. The chapter begins with an analysis, by way of background, of the main types of domestic servants and the chief varieties of servant-family relationship. Next there follows an explanation and a brief appraisal of the sources of information utilized in this study. The main body of the chapter is devoted to an inductive summary of the data on the ways in which domestic servants affect family relations and child development.

### TYPES OF SERVANTS

Each servant-family-child relationship is in many ways a case unto itself. In considering a number of cases, however, one finds certain recurring variables. One set of these consists of the kinds or types of servants; another, of the nature of the relationships between family and servant. In part, these two overlap; but they are sufficiently distinct to be separated for purposes of general discussion.

One of the most obvious and significant distinctions in types of servants is between those who "live in" with the family and those who do not. This difference is important in its effect upon the extent to which the servant shares in the family life. Servants who "live in" are apt to become a more intimate part of the family routine, particularly so with reference to the life of the younger children. The U. S. Census of 1940 reports a total of 1,033,772 such servants living in private households. This figure does not include the servants who work

in a household but live out, which means that they maintain a home elsewhere that is utilized chiefly for sleeping and leisure-time purposes. Some of this latter group work regularly in homes, and achieve a status close to that of the servant who "lives in"; others work irregularly or on a part-time basis, with resultant modifications in their relationship to the family.

Domestic servants can be grouped on the basis of race and national-origin differentials. In certain countries, such as England and Spain, and in some areas, perhaps chiefly rural, in the United States, most servants are of the same race and nationality as the families they work for. In this country, however, for the most part this is not the case. In the South and East, most household domestics are Negroes or members of earlier immigrant groups. In these cases, the employer-employee relationship is reinforced by considerations of racial attitudes and minority group status.

Finally, servants may be classified by the nature of their jobs. There is, for example, the household manager, found in larger homes with a staff of servants; there is the general utility maid who does all kinds of housework; there are the specialized jobs—nursemaid, governess, cook, upstairs girl, laundress, etc. The nature of the job has much to do with the relationship developed between servant and family, and particularly between servant and child. This is equally true of the other distinctions between kinds of servants that have just been summarized.

#### SERVANT-FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

The nature of the relationship which prevails between family and servant is highly important for the purposes of this chapter. Obviously, the variations here are endless, but six general aspects can easily be identified. First are the cases in which the servant has some social or kinship relation to the family. This includes the distant relative whom the family takes over; the reputed relative, where a myth of kinship is maintained to soften the servant status; and the impoverished "friend of the family" who came as a guest and stays on "to help out." In these and other cases, the relationship may be described as somewhat more than an employer-employee one, with a limited social and kinship aspect.

Second are the cases where the servant comes to be spoken of as a member, or almost a member, of the family, but where there is no

kinship or family bond. For the most part, in these situations the service has been of such long duration and so satisfactory in character, and the family's social position is so secure that it can afford to assume the paternalistic tradition, with but slight emphasis upon the ordinary symbols and distinctions. The phrase "member of the family" usually means that the servant has a higher status than domestics in general, that less deferential behavior is required, and that she may share in some of the family's common activities.

Another relationship is that in which the mistress and the servant work side by side. These cases are most numerous on farms or where large families make necessary heavy household duties; hence the servant is more of a helper or fellow employee than one who "waits upon" the family.

In marked contrast are the homes where the "help" have a distinctive servant status. There may be the symbols of distinctive dress or "uniform," a servants' entrance, separate living quarters, and the like. These and other symbols bespeak a formality in the relationships between servant and family, and usually indicate a distinct cleavage between the two.

The socially distant but personally friendly relations between Negro servants and white families, found in the old South and elsewhere, is another type of relationship which appears as natural in certain areas of this country as it seems incomprehensible to persons from other areas. "Colored domestics who have worked for upper-class white families for many years are often allowed not only a wide province of authority with regard to the house, the children, and the choice of foods, but also a semi-familial relationship with their white employers."<sup>1</sup>

A final type of relationship to be identified here includes those servants who come from the same race or national-origin group as the employer, or even from a different group of a higher status. Here one is apt to find deep resentment and a sense of frustrated pride which may express itself in a highly impersonal relationship, or in intermittent sniping, particularly at the younger and more defenseless members of the families.

These differences in the type of servant and of family-servant relationship are very important in any analysis of the servant's role in child

<sup>1</sup> Allison Davis, B. B. Gardner, and Mary R. Gardner, *Deep South*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1941, p. 445. This book contains much interesting information on domestic servants in the South, with some references to their relationship with children.

development. Two general kinds of situations are particularly significant. One is where the servant has the specialized task of child care. This ranges from the young girl, perhaps of high-school age, who comes to play with the child in the afternoon, serve his dinner, and put him to bed, to the full-time nursemaid who, in addition to supervising the children, cleans their room, washes their clothes, and the like. In the other type of situation the more trusted domestic servant is given some authority over the children, may discuss with the parents the problems of child rearing, or be given specific instructions to apply policies formulated by the parents.

Although such situations stand out as of obvious importance, the fact to be emphasized here is that domestic servants as a group, simply through their presence if in no other way, are part of the family life in which the child is inducted into his culture. Much of the relationship between children and servants consists of the minutiae of family life, ignored because of their repetitious triviality yet significant for that very reason. The simple fact is that many mothers, and fathers, have no conception of the importance of what goes on in the child's home life, other than formalized instruction, and they tend to "shed" much of the child-caring process as a bothersome detail. The mother who does not trust her "help" to wash and dry her best set of china but does trust her to spend the afternoon with Junior in the park; the clubwoman who leaves her children with a semi-illiterate Polish nursemaid while she attends such "interesting" meetings; the bridge fiend who cannot be bothered with the incessant questions of her five-year-old daughter and leaves them to be answered by a superstitious old mammy—these and others like them are no figments of the imagination.

#### SOURCES OF INFORMATION—A METHODOLOGICAL NOTE

The remainder of this chapter presents the results of a "first" study that sought to find the ways in which domestic servants affect the social development of the child. The information upon which this study is based was obtained from two sources. The first is an analysis of 100 autobiographies selected on the sole basis that the author must have written of his earlier life. Of these, 44 autobiographies contained references to the domestic servants in the home in which the author lived as a child. Of these 44, five were merely incidental references; that is, a servant was mentioned only as being present during a certain

scene, and there was no suggestion of her having had any influence on the child's personality formation or on his family life. Nevertheless, three of these five references were to the author's earliest memory of his life, and they all included a family servant's presence. In the 44 autobiographies there were two other references to earliest memories which also included a family servant. Thirty-nine of the authors who wrote about servants described them as real people, as being closely associated with them in their early years of development, as having considerable influence upon them personally, and as being an integral part of their family life. Several of the autobiographers devoted as much as a whole chapter to one or two servants, or to the part all the servants played in the early family situation.

Most of these 39 writers seemed to consider family servants as definite members of the early family circle—not quite on a par with parents and siblings, but more intimately connected with the family situation than anyone else outside the immediate family. One author voices the attitude that many suggest: During childhood, there were two worlds of which one gradually became conscious—the inside world and the outside world. The core of the inside world was Mamma and Papa, the dispensers of necessities and the final court of judgment. The rest of the inside world consisted of nurses, governesses, cooks, maids, housekeepers, who did everything for one and who were with one all the time. Another author writes: "They were more than the friends of the family. They were *us* as much as ours." And still another: "These faithful creatures did indeed move in and out amongst us like shadows. We were not aware of them. In their presence we dressed and undressed. To them we unbosomed ourselves more freely than to our own parents."

Any fair appraisal of this autobiographical material must emphasize both its values and its weaknesses. On the credit side is the fact that these references to servants were made spontaneously. No questionnaires were submitted to the authors, no leading questions were asked, no suggestions were made. In fact, the situations were rather "loaded" against it; yet nearly half of this unselected group of a hundred successful persons, writing about the recollections of their childhood, included references to the role of servants in their lives. In their comments, they represent no school of academic thought, nor are they tarred by the brush of any theory of interpretation of personality development. On the other hand, these authors are successful persons,

writing in a genial mood and with nice manners for popular consumption. Naturally, under these circumstances, there will be a tendency to be interpretive in a friendly rather than in a critical vein. One other possible criticism must be acknowledged, and this has to do with the general time span covered by these autobiographical references. The childhood of most of these authors covered the years at the turn of the century. They are writing, therefore, about servants and family-servant relationships as they existed during that general period, and not today when these situations are admittedly different in at least some respects.

The second source of information utilized in this study is a series of what may be termed interactive interviews. This term is applied to interviews in which the subjects are asked to tell about their early experiences with servants in the home, to recall acts, sayings, attitudes, relationships, etc., in as much detail as possible; and where, in addition, the interviewer asks pointed questions and suggests various leads. Information of this sort was gathered from a total of 21 persons. Of these, 15 were men and 6 were women; they ranged in age from 10 to 54 years. Obviously, the number and dispersion of cases call for extreme caution in the use of the material gathered.

Comparing the interview material with that derived from the autobiographies, we see that in many respects they agree with or tend to supplement each other. On the other hand, the interview material tends to be franker, more critical, less nice as it were. After all, people will say in frank conversation many things which they would hesitate to publish in a book, particularly when discussing certain aspects of their lives. These contrasts will appear a number of times in the summary of the material which follows.

DOMESTIC SERVANT—FAMILY LIFE—CHILD DEVELOPMENT—  
AN INDUCTIVE SUMMARY

*The Domestic Servant May Be a Mother-Surrogate.*

In the life stories of some autobiographers, a woman servant is remembered as a real mother-substitute. One writes: "Our 'Fraulein,' who had come to us shortly before I was born and stayed with us seventeen years, was the most cherished soul in the household. We called her 'Liebe' (which means Love) and there was no worse catastrophe than if she refused to kiss us good-night." Another spoke of Lucy, a Negro

servant: "As for us little ones, Lucy was our all-in-all. She mended our clothes, tucked us in our cribs when we went to bed, knit our socks, held our noses when we took castor oil, and occasionally heard our prayers." And still another: "She [my nurse] was more to me than the usual mother would have been or could have been who had any other responsibilities."

Usually, this kind of servant filled the early physical and affectional needs of the child whose mother was too busy, too social, too formal, or who just did not care to perform such duties for her child. Usually, too, this type of servant was the sort of woman who had chosen her position because of her instinctive maternity, and who gave to the child a sincere love and understanding that grew out of her own warm nature and that is not inherent in every woman who happens to bear children. One sensed, in some of the cases, that the child was saved from affectional insecurity by having had the good fortune to include in his family circle a mother-substitute as well as his own mother.

The effects upon family relationships of this devotion between servant and child varied. There were children who greedily absorbed the affection of both servant and parent and felt the richer for having both. There were those who considered their mothers as beautiful ladies, and the servants as menial but nevertheless dearer. One writer remembered with gratitude the girl who stayed with the family for a time and made the home run smoothly at last. His mother was a very poor housekeeper and his home had been in turmoil. Finally, there was one young child, who, when his mother took him from his adored nurse's lap to show him off to her company, slapped her in the face with lusty resentment against her.

Only two cases in the interview material fall into this category, but both support the autobiographical record in this respect. In one of the cases in particular, the mother is represented as stern and cold, and the child found an affectionate haven in a highly maternal servant. In the other, the mother's employment and obvious preoccupation with her business left the child to make the servant her surrogate.

*The Domestic May Act as a Go-Between and Mitigator of the Harshnesses of Family Life.*

A great many writers remembered the family servants who interceded for them and acted as conspirators with them against the vicissitudes and stern regulations of family life. They stood somewhere half-



way between child and parent and helped in small ways to spare them from each other. Susie, who heard her charge's screams when his father was beating him, ran for her Madam to tell her that the Master was killing the boy. The beating stopped and the boy remembered. Children who were not allowed sweets or evening snacks were treated to them secretly by friendly servants. Susan, who knew her little charge would be punished for losing his silver cup, helped him make up an elaborate lie about what had become of it, and stoutly corroborated his story when he told it. Nurse Kelly was always extracting her young master from scrapes, and when she could not do that she would sit outside the room in which he was confined for punishment, and feed and console him. To still his curiosity, another servant conspired to let a youngster peek into a room which had been forbidden to him, with the well-remembered result of finding an occupied coffin in the room and causing subsequent confession to Mother. The frequency with which this kind of act on the part of a servant was mentioned leads one to believe that the relaxing of regulations, the assuaging of punishments, and the sharing of secret pleasures were comfortable contributions to early home life. One suspects that some parents are a bit warier of their treatment of children in the presence of such servants.

There are constant references to this in the interview material, with additional information which suggests that servants are not above a bit of conniving in this respect—reporting the child to the parent for discipline and then seeking to soften the punishment that follows. Particularly stern parents, as hard in their dealings with servants as they are rigorous in disciplining their children, may well unite servant and child in the solace of conspiracy.

### *Servants Provide Companionship for the Young Child.*

There is much evidence that these autobiographers depended a great deal upon servants for companionship when they were quite young and at home most of the time, and when the parents and older siblings might be off visiting or at school. These good companions whose presence the children constantly sought included page boys who taught them to play soccer, a butler who told jokes and sang songs, a footman who gave lessons in the *Savatte*. A gamekeeper let his master's sons practically share with him his woods and wild life. Tony, the gardener, engaged in "important conversations" with his young master. An old

French servant and his dog "Mouche" were Sir Henry Layard's earliest companions. These servants were pretty much confined to the home grounds, as was the young child. They were accessible. They were, ordinarily, the simple, hearty kind of folk who enjoy children, and their duties were full of interest for the youngsters because they were not part of their own inner family life, and so seemed glamorous and adventurous.

The interview material and other supplementary data indicate that the amount of the time shared by servant and child tends to be determined in large measure by the age of the child, the factor of sex similarity, the mother's role and attitude in the child-caring process, and the special type of servant involved. An adult male, included in the interviews, tells of his devotion, from about his seventh to his tenth year, to a rather colorful Irish cook, which led him to spend countless hours in her company, even at the cost of running errands for her and otherwise helping in her work.

*The Servant May Enlarge a Child's Knowledge of Many Aspects of Life Which are Alien to Him in His Own Immediate Family, or from Which His Parents Have Carefully Protected Him.*

Two of the authors wrote about the delight they had as children in the literature that they found "below stairs." One of them recalls, "As one may read of strange customs in far lands, I learned of the exploits of contemporary murderers, the daily business of police courts and policemen and prisons, thrilling shipwrecks and railroad accidents, accepting all without horror as a part of the oddity of life. If I wondered at all, the wonderment ended in a conclusion to the effect that my parents and their friends were strangely unadventurous, intellectually."

One boy remembers visiting the cabin of a Negro servant and being enchanted with all the photographs of colored girls that adorned the walls. There are several references to parties in the servants' quarters which fascinated the children with new pictures of adult behavior. Poultney Bigelow, whose butler escorted him around Paris, writes, "My father was in my eyes the wisest man living, but as I retrospect at this moment, I feel sure that before I was eleven years of age I had experienced many phases of Parisian life about which he knew nothing save possibly through books."

Another aspect of this enlarging of horizons came about from the fact that the behavior of servants was revealed and discussed by the

family in instances where the same behavior on the part of a family member would have been kept hidden. Children learned, for instance, through family discussions, that the faithful and loved woman servant was a laudanum addict; that all the maids were sooner or later dismissed for sexual irregularities; that a nurse was fired for meeting a sailor at night; that "after the third time father had staked James to the Keeley Cure he gave up the effort to rid him of the curse of intemperance. . . . Today, at seventy-six, James still puts in a twelve-hour day, seven days a week, 'helping out' on the place, and proves that his stamina has not been undermined by the Demon Rum. A great lesson to us all"; that all the women servants in the home were periodic drunkards taken from a women's prison in an effort to help them save their own souls.

The interview material is particularly clear in regard to this second aspect. All but three of the subjects have rather vivid recollections of family discussions of the vagaries of the servants' behavior. Mary, the unmarried maid, terminates her employment because she is going to have a baby. Sarah, the cook, has been on a spree for the past two days. Katie has not been to work this week because she had to move after her "husband's" wife made a scene. Helen's husband has been arrested for being in the numbers racket, and Helen wants two weeks' advance salary. These and other incidents in the interview material are recalled as the occasion when as children these subjects had their first contacts with illegitimacy, drunkenness, adultery, and petty crime.

### *Servants May Influence the Sex Life of Children.*

The autobiographies reveal three different aspects of the servants' influence upon the children's sex life.

First, there was instruction in the facts of sexual reproduction. "Youth was carefully 'guarded' in those days, and neither my father nor my uncle ever gave me any information as to the 'facts of life' either in connection with animals or humans, but I acquired them from the farm hands."

Second, two of the men writers speak of having had sex relations with girls employed by their family. One of them was taught the art as a small boy by a hired girl; the other "managed very well on the matter of natural gratification through the compliance of servingmaids about town and in my mother's service without any disaster either of body or of mind, so far as I can see even to this day."

A third aspect of this influence upon sex life came through the first awakening of the romantic urge in the small boys, by their awareness of their nurses and governesses as desirable women. Many men write about these domestic servants as their first ideal marriage-partner choice. Their awareness of the women varied with their individual natures and the responsiveness of the particular women. Some of the boys fell in love at a purely ideal level. Others were smitten with more profane love. One describes his juvenile passion for his nursemaid, and his very sensual delight in being drawn across her knees to receive an easily tolerated smacking.

One effect of these infant love affairs for nursemaids would seem to be a by-passing, or a mitigating, of the Oedipus complex in the normal family situation. A small boy can fall in love with his nurse without experiencing the heavily guilty incest feelings which would be provoked by a similar passion for his mother, and also without experiencing the deep hatred toward his father which such a situation produces.

The interview material not only reveals the three aspects indicated by the autobiographies, but suggests other facts which may be of considerable importance. One is the role of the sex differential in this respect. All of the men and none of the women interviewed acknowledged at least some implications for sex behavior resulting from the presence of servants in their home during their youth. Most of the servants referred to by the men were women, and at least one in each home was not too old or too plain to be of interest as a woman.

From all that one can gather, it has been a very old and not altogether uncommon practice in times past, and in many parts of the world, for male children to have their first, or at least a very early, sex experience with a domestic servant. Apparently, this has been true also in this country, especially where white domestics are employed, and where they live in. This seems to have been particularly true in rural areas in the case of farm boys. Although these women servants were much older than the boys, often by from ten to twenty years, it is significant that most of the men speak of these as helpful experiences which served to lay the foundation for an early development of normal reactions to sex experiences. Several of the men interviewed, who reported sex relations with domestic servants, said they thought that it focused their attention too much and too early upon sex but agreed that it emphasized heterosexual rather than homosexual development.

There are indications that this particular role of the domestic servant has been changing in recent years. Several factors are involved. One of these is the increasing employment of Negro servants in white families. While Negro females are not without attraction for white males, as a great wealth of evidence attests, the color line may be crossed sexually less often when there is a marked age differential on the female side. Second is the increasing practice of the servants' living out, which often removes the occasion or opportunity. Third is the child's earlier exodus from the home to the school.

One other fact seen between the lines of these data is the sharp differences on a sex basis in the mores concerning servant-child sex relationships. When a young boy gains sex experience with an older servant woman, the mores at best indicate only slight disapproval, and rather frequently a mild approval. For the young boy it is considered fair game, and the older woman is thought of as having done him somewhat of a good turn by initiating him into his masculine prerogatives. But any semblance of the contrasting situation, with an older male servant suggesting or achieving sex relations with a young daughter in the family, would be universally condemned. He would be considered to have taken advantage of a minor, and be legally charged with rape.

*Servants in the Home Can Give Children an Introduction to the Meaning of Class Status, Class Culture, and Class Strife, and Help to Mold their Attitudes About These Things.*

Several of the authors of these autobiographies indicate that early in life they became aware of the status of the servants in relation to that of their family, and seemed to be troubled with a sense of injustice about the difference. One child was sensitive to the fact that his tutor ate his meals with him as if he had never before had good food. Some mentioned the hard work and small pay, and sometimes tried to help the servants with their work. But what bothered them more was that their parents controlled so completely even the private lives of their servants. A man remembers with distaste the time a cook asked permission to spend the night with her husband and was refused. The fact that she spent the night with him in the barn anyway was considered indecent. When a relative of one of the maids in the same family was dying, the child's mother told him that "the lower classes" make a great fuss about these matters but do not feel them as "we"

do. The injustice of this remark, to a boy who knew the servants well and loved them deeply, remained with him all his life. We can assume that among those authors who did not mention servants were those who came to a consciousness of class without any feeling of injustice, and permanently ceased to think of servants as human beings about whom one writes stories, or who in any way affect one's private life.

The children also noticed a way of living quite different from their own when they entered the servants' quarters or visited the homes of married servants, and they reacted variously. At one extreme a child was charmed by the wholesome simplicity, warmth, and lack of formality and regulation in the home of his nurse, and was never so happy as during his visits with her. At the other extreme, a young lady was appalled at all the evidences of the lower-class lack of adornment and begged her mother never, never to let her become poor. One boy was pretty continuously perplexed, but was made thoughtful, by the scullery boy's discussions about the behavior of the "upstairs folks." Some of this boy's remembered comments were: "You people upstairs stuff like pigs. That's what. You'll want some of that bloody grub one of these days"; and, in regard to his own type of reading material, "It don't lower any self-respec' in me to hear that someone killed someone. But it'd make me blush like the devil to enjoy what some of 'em upstairs enjoy talkin' about."

One aspect of class consciousness experienced by children who lived during the Civil War was class strife, and the relationship between the political world and racial groups. They remembered the helplessness of their families as they watched the conflict among their own Negro servants as they wondered whether to leave the families they loved and who had treated them well, or to stand the scorn of other Negroes by remaining and not taking the offered freedom. These writers also recall the return of some of the servants after an absence in the North. Some were obviously less well off than before, but were clinging sternly to "freedom." Others had turned haughty and were useless as servants. Still others ignored the whole business of emancipation and remained with their families, unchanged.

### *The Servant Often Personifies a Social Type to the Child.*

Among the persons interviewed there was not so much overt refer-

ence to class differences as to minority group implications. This was due probably to the fact that the people included in the study had lived as children in the northeastern part of the country where domestic servants were recruited chiefly from immigrant groups and more recently from the Negro race. All but three of the subjects agreed that their concept of selected minority groups as types was first formulated on the basis of their contacts with domestic servants from those groups. Among the younger persons these were chiefly Negroes, but among the older individuals the references were to the Irish, Polish, and Swedish. Further exploration of this point suggests the larger principle involved: that the servant often comes to the attention of the child as the personification of a type, not only of a minority group but of all kinds of social and personality types. For example, one of the case records reveals that the first nursemaid was spoken of by the parents as an orphan, and the subject remembers that as late as her thirteenth birthday she conceived of an orphan as a nursemaid with blue eyes and dark hair. This identification of the domestic servant with a social type is most likely to occur where the type is outside the range of the family's experience.

*Servants, in Ignorance, Can Instill Deep Fears in Children, Which Make for Insecurity and Timidity.*

There were nine separate references in the autobiographical material to deep fears that affect personality and which were implanted by foolish servants. The locking of a brother in a dark closet produced terrible fears of the dark in one child. Threats of hell-fire permanently disturbed the early years of other youngsters. Stories about ghosts and witches and smugglers, which some children loved, nevertheless made shivering cowards of them. One boy was "perfectly terrified when the chimney-sweep arrived with his attendant coal-black imps, for the usual threat of foolish nurses to their charges when they proved refractory was, 'If you are not good I shall give you to the sweep, and then you'll have to climb up the chimney.'"

The interview material makes only incidental reference to such matters save in one respect, and this has to do with the servant as a source of superstitions. Apparently one of the ways in which busy domestic servants "entertain" the young members of the household

in many cases is to recount colorful bits of folklore, superstitions, old wives' tales, and odd bits of proverbial wisdom. Naturally, these reflect the cultural background and level of the servant. Here, again, the racial and national origin identification of the servant becomes significant.

*The Presence of Servants Can Reveal Personality Traits of Family Members More Clearly to Each Other.*

Many of the writers of the autobiographies mentioned their early attitudes about their parents' behavior toward servants, and the servants' toward their parents. In general, the children resented any unfair harsh treatment by their parents to loved servants, admired their skillful and imaginative handling of them, and were awed by the deep devotion which often existed between their parents and long-time domestics. Gossip in the servants' hall about family members was revealing to the children. One youngster became a bit less frightened of his pompous father because his old Negro servant always laughed till she cried at the Master's nasty temper tantrums—and got away with it.

One particular aspect of the servant's role in revealing the parent's character to the child is mentioned in the interview material. One record refers at some length to a stepfather's romantic interest in a comely governess. Apparently, this employer found many occasions to spend time with his stepdaughter and nursemaid, and the relationship which developed between him and the maid seems not to have been lost upon either the child or her mother. This situation, in substance, is one that has frequently been used by novelists.

*Servants of Long Duration Can Serve as Informal Family Historians, and Give the Child an "Outsider's" View of the Family. On the Credit Side, Faithful Old Retainers May Early Give the Child a Sense of Family Continuity and Pride.*

A number of the authors of the autobiographies spoke of old servants as considering the family, through successive generations, as their own family. Two of them were described as family historians, who knew all the experiences and anecdotes of the family and handed them down to the children. Another servant impressed a very young child, who cried when stuck by a pin, with the fact that he had a brave and noble family to live up to, and made him vow to be a more courageous and fitting member of his family.



The servants' role as family historian, however, may take a less pleasant turn than has just been indicated. Two of the people interviewed mention experiences which illustrate this. In one case, Chester, a general handyman in the family's employ for many years, apparently had stored up a good deal of resentment against his employer, and he "took this out" on the young boy, when no one else was about, by reminding him of his father's business failure years ago, as well as the reputed adulterous habits of the boy's aunt. In the other case, a garrulous cook would remind her employer's daughter, when they were alone, of the general reputation of the maternal branch of the family as "hard to get along with, and not worth the trouble at that."

*Servants, by Adding Mere Numbers of People to the Family Circle, Can Increase the Complexity of Family Life. They Can Also Relieve Complexity, and Furnish Extra Resources for Smooth Family Relationships.*

The autobiographical material reveals that turmoils in family life were caused by inefficiency among, and problems with, servants. The physical and psychological management of a train of servants was the cause of one mother's constant fretting and weariness and of the irritation of her husband at having to pay the bills and yet never having the household running quite smoothly. Children who took delight in driving their governesses into leaving them, one after another, created family problems. Overbearing domestics struggled for supremacy over their employers and sometimes gained it, reducing the members of the family to a group of bewildered puppets dependent on a servant for their general scheme of life, and causing a sense of inadequacy or inferiority in the family.

Yet, there were other situations in which one or a group of servants took over the reins of the household in such a way as to relieve the family of all the ordinary physical stresses of living, thus leaving them free to cultivate a harmonious home life. Particularly in the relationship between parent and child was this kind of servant valuable. He spared parents the irritation caused by the difficult parts of child rearing, and at the same time he offered entertainment to the child at times when the latter might have become a trouble to his family; he also acted as a buffer between parents and child and sibling, as well as an extra person to go to for consolation when irritations did arise.

Servants in the home, by adding to the number of persons there,

increase the number of sets of personal relations, in accordance with the Law of Family Interaction set forth in an earlier chapter. The interview material contains no reference to this, except in two cases where the large number of family members and servants early impressed the child with a certain hecticness of life. In fact, the comments of one of the persons interviewed were strikingly similar to the statement quoted in Chapter IV from Santayana's autobiography.

*The Presence of Servants in the Home Permits More Leisurely Parenthood and Family Life in General.*

Both the autobiographical and the interview material fail to emphasize the leisure resulting from the presence of servants, but it appears constantly between the lines. These are facts which obviously are more apparent to the outside observer than to the participant in the family situation. More extended consideration will be given to this aspect in the next chapter.

*The Presence of Servants May Make for a Certain Restraint in Family Interaction.*

The restraint caused by servants is another point not mentioned in the autobiographical or volunteered in the interview material. In answer to direct questioning, all the persons interviewed agreed that the presence of servants makes for a certain restraint in personal relations within the home, particularly between parents and children. No matter how favored his position, the servant is still a servant. From this standpoint, he is an outsider, an audience, before whom you restrain yourself. The parent must not forget his role of employer, especially in the presence of the employee. Punishment, for example, may be postponed or softened; admonition is tempered with dignity; petty annoyances caused by the child must be dealt with in a manner befitting the entire witnessing personnel. The presence of the servant, like that of the guest, turns the private, dual relationship of parent and child into a triangular, semi-public one.

SOME UNEXPLORED ASPECTS OF THE ROLE OF THE SERVANT IN  
CHILD DEVELOPMENT

In addition to the foregoing, there are other aspects of the role of the servant in child development which call for exploration, three of which

will be referred to briefly. First, how does the presence of servants affect the amount and duration of the waiting-upon which the child receives? This includes being waited on not only in the more elemental phases of living, but also in such matters as care of one's room, clothes, money, toys, and the like. This undoubtedly has significance for the child's development not only of habits of responsibility and self-reliance, but also of his scale of work values.

Again, there is the child's passage from protected to unprotected competitive situations. In most families, competitive activities involving young children are arranged and manipulated so as to show them off to advantage; i.e., the competition is "protected" so as to let them win. As the child grows older, parents gradually cease this manipulation so that he must compete on terms of equality, or of "unprotected" competition. What is the effect of the presence of servants, of their participation in the child's activities, of the relative leisure which their presence gives to parents, on this transfer in the life of the child? Is protected competition prolonged unduly so that the "young master" may continue to appear to advantage? Some children are driven to school by a chauffeur, others have to fight their way there. Some children play games with servants; others, with the neighbor's children. These may be significant differences in the child's development.

Akin to this is a third aspect, the effect of the presence of servants upon the child's conception of the self. Two contrasting situations are apparent in the cases of Neal and Paul. Neal lives in a home in which there are four servants—a cook, an upstairs girl, a chauffeur, and a gardener. Three of the four seem devoted to him, and fetch and carry for him at his slightest command. Neal is seldom seen on the six-acre estate without two or three "retainers," as it were. At thirteen he is accustomed to the habit of command. His situation is quite different from that of Paul, who lives with his father and mother in a modest five-room war emergency home. His father is away much of the time, his mother is not in good health. There are no servants. Since he was two years old, Paul not only has looked after himself but has constantly served as a "mother's helper." One senses, as a result of the presence or absence of servants, not only the early crystallization of patterns of being served or of serving oneself, of distinguishing the tasks which one does and those which one delegates, but also of the larger matter of one's whole conception of oneself.

## SUMMARY

1. In homes employing domestic help, the servant is a definite part of the child's family world.

2. Servants may be classified or typed on the basis of whether they "live in" or not, of their racial and national origin, and of the nature of their job.

3. Six definite kinds of family-servant relationships are noted: (a) where the servant bears some kinship or social relation to the employer; (b) where service has been of long and satisfactory duration, so that the servant may be referred to as "a member of the family"; (c) where the servant is really a fellow employee; (d) where the help has a distinct servant status, with the customary symbols of service status; (e) where the servant has a socially distant but personally friendly status; and (f) where the servant bears a marked resentment toward the employer based on relative minority group status.

4. Published autobiographies and records of interviews are two available sources for studying the role of the servant in child development. Forty-four out of 100 autobiographies and 21 interview records were utilized in the study summarized in this chapter.

5. From the material assembled, thirteen conclusions are drawn. (a) The domestic servant may be a mother-surrogate; (b) the domestic may act as a go-between and mitigator of the harshnesses of family life; (c) servants provide companionship for the young child; (d) the servant may enlarge a child's knowledge of many aspects of life which are alien to him in his own immediate family, or from which his parents have carefully protected him; (e) servants may influence the sex life of children; (f) servants in the home can give children an introduction to the meaning of class status, class culture, and class strife, and help to mold their attitudes about these things; (g) the servant often personifies a social type to the child; (h) servants, in ignorance, can instill deep fears in children which make for insecurity and timidity; (i) the presence of servants can reveal personality traits of family members more clearly to each other; (j) servants of long duration can serve as informal family historians, and give the child an "outsider's" view of the family; (k) by adding mere numbers of people to the family circle, servants can increase the complexity of family life; they can also relieve complexity and furnish extra resources for smooth family relationships; (l) the presence of servants in the home permits more leisurely parenthood and family life in general; (m) the presence of servants may make for a certain restraint in family interaction.

## Part IV:

### Class and Status Differentials



## The Child and the Class Structure



Thus far, the family background of child development has been analyzed in general terms with only slight reference to those major differentiations, known as social classes, which exist in all but perhaps the most primitive societies. It is the purpose of this chapter, first, to survey briefly the nature of these differentiations in our contemporary society, and then to consider, somewhat more at length, their meaning for child development.

### THE CONCEPT OF SOCIAL CLASS

#### *Earlier Economic Emphasis.*

The concept of class came into the literature of sociology from economic sources and until recently has been considered chiefly in its economic implications. The differences between classes were expressed largely in terms of wealth and income, and what these have been able to command by way of goods and services. In line with this emphasis, the processes of social stratification were identified in terms of economic competition and conflict, until a considerable number of students of society, following the lead of Marx and Engels, interpreted the whole social process in terms of the class struggle. "The history of all hitherto existing society," they wrote in the *Communist Manifesto*, "is the history of the class struggle."

Because of the common assumption that social classes are primarily economic in origin and character, the findings of Landtman are significant. After examining a vast amount of anthropological material, he emphasizes rather the fundamental importance of such original factors as age, sex, and differences in personal endowments. Through the maze of ceremony and customs of various societies, he traces the rise of certain elements in the population to positions of superiority, showing how differences in personal traits break down the utopian

equalities of primitive culture. Differences in wealth are of subsequent importance (1) in enabling certain classes to acquire various prestige symbols which become identifying characteristics, (2) in the acquisition of advantages which can be turned into sources of new distinction, and (3) in the transmission of class advantages from one generation to another. Wealth, in other words, tends to reinforce and to perpetuate inequalities which result from the operation of other factors.<sup>1</sup>

### *Class in Terms of Status.*

Contemporary sociologists have defined social classes primarily in terms of status. Although historically distinct, the combination of the ideas of class and status systems is easy to understand since they exist side and side and frequently overlap. A social class, thus defined, is an aggregate of persons having approximately the same social status in a given society. Status is utilized as a generalized concept implying the arrangement of groups of people on a comparative scale, in terms of social distance and prestige as well as of reciprocal rights and duties. This makes a social class a relative matter, since the basic idea of status is a recognized relationship between groups and persons. As Ogburn and Nimkoff put it, "The fundamental attribute of a social class is its social position of relative superiority or inferiority to other social classes."<sup>2</sup>

The conception of social classes in terms of status, so emphasized by current sociologists and applied particularly to the status systems of modern urban communities, involves primarily a sociopsychological approach. Its criteria are not so much functional and objective as they are subjective, emphasizing primarily how people regard themselves and each other. Such an emphasis is likely to prevail in a society where class distinctions are in process of rapidly developing into relatively fixed formalities.

### *Class as a Culture Concept.*

There is another possible way to approach the study of social classes and that is to conceive of them as selective cultural groupings, each with its identifying mode of living and habits of thought. Such a con-

<sup>1</sup>Gunnar Landtman, *The Origin of the Inequality of the Social Classes*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1938.

<sup>2</sup>W. F. Ogburn and Meyer Nimkoff, *Sociology*, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1946, p. 309.



ception takes the direction of Max Weber's unfinished definition of class in which he includes the possession of economic means, an external standard of living, cultural and recreational facilities, and the possibilities of communal action.<sup>3</sup> It tends to coincide with Werner Sombart's emphases upon common interests, ideology, consciousness of cohesion, and particularly ways of thinking which are representative of particular systems of economic organization.<sup>4</sup> It embodies Ginsberg's definition of a social class as a group of individuals who, through common consent and similarity of occupation, wealth, and education, have come to have a similar mode of life and a similar stock of ideas, feelings, attitudes, and forms of behavior and who, on any or all of these grounds meet one another on equal terms and regard themselves, although with varying degrees of explicitness, as belonging to one group.<sup>5</sup> Or, put more pithily, it makes a social class "the largest group of persons whose members have intimate access to each other."<sup>6</sup>

A social class, properly understood, is a cultural reality. Approached scientifically, its identification is not an academic exercise in snobbery or a subjective evaluation, but a recognition of the fact that people live and work and play and think at different levels. The differences between classes are not merely financial or ostentatious; they encompass the entire range of social behavior—occupation, consumption habits, education, manner of speaking, mode of dress, philosophy of life, recreational pursuits, associational activity, social attitudes, family life, and the like. Once social classes and class differences are thus conceived in terms of relatively fixed patterns of behavior, the whole subject of class is opened for objective study.

How distinct and fixed class patterns are varies a good deal from place to place and time to time. Some of the more important factors affecting this process, as identified by Cooley years ago,<sup>7</sup> are: (1) marked differences in the constituent parts of the population; (2) little communication and enlightenment; and (3) a slow rate of social change. Others include differences in wealth, increasing division of labor, and size of community. Generally speaking, the more a social

<sup>3</sup> C. W. Mills and H. H. Gerth, in *Politics*, October, 1944, pp. 271-278.

<sup>4</sup> Werner Sombart, *Der moderne Kapitalismus*, Munich, 1924-1927.

<sup>5</sup> Morris Ginsberg, "Class Consciousness," in the *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, vol. iii, p. 536.

<sup>6</sup> Allison Davis, B. B. Gardner, and Mary R. Gardner, *Deep South*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1941, p. 59.

<sup>7</sup> Charles H. Cooley, *Social Organization*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1922, pp. 217 ff.

class is segregated and isolated, the more definitely do its members tend to develop their own distinctive activities and interests. In other words, the more social classes become distinct and fixed, the more do their respective members reveal a fixity and predictability of class behavior.

#### THE CONTEMPORARY CLASS PATTERN

Common usage has long recognized three social classes—upper, middle, and lower. This tripartite system roughly classifies the rich, the poor, and those who are in between. Recently, Warner and his associates,<sup>8</sup> accepting this basic division, have subdivided each into an upper and a lower group, thus resulting in a sixfold classification of upper upper, lower upper, upper middle, lower middle, upper lower, and lower lower. Whatever else may be said concerning this classification, it has the double merit for our purposes of allowing a relatively sufficient number of social levels for generalized study, and also of being the result of inductive identification.

It is another customary assumption that society shows a distribution of social classes like a truncated pyramid, with the lowest class at the base and the others arranged above in corresponding proportionate order. Although it is difficult to get accurate data on this, two studies of restricted scope bearing on this are presented in summary form. One of these is the "Yankee City" study of a New England community, in which a total of 16,785 persons were assigned definitely to class membership. The distribution is summarized in Table 2.

TABLE 2. Distribution of Population by Class<sup>9</sup>

| CLASS   | NUMBER | PER CENT         |
|---------|--------|------------------|
|         |        | TOTAL POPULATION |
| UU      | 242    | 1 44             |
| LU      | 262    | 1 56             |
| UM      | 1,715  | 10 22            |
| LM      | 4,720  | 28.12            |
| UL      | 5,471  | 32.60            |
| LL      | 4,234  | 25 22            |
| Unknown | 141    | 0 84             |
| Total   | 16,785 | 100.00           |

<sup>8</sup> W. Lloyd Warner and Paul S. Lunt, *The Social Life of a Modern Community*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1941. Cf. also, Davis, Gardner, and Gardner, *op cit.*

<sup>9</sup> Warner and Lunt, *op. cit.*, p. 203.

This distribution does not conform to the "pyramidal" form, partly because, according to the authors, of the high proportion of skilled and the low proportion of unskilled workers in the silverware and shoe factories. This reference to the occupational factor suggests the possible value of the second table to be presented. This is the well-known table in which gainful workers in the United States are classified into social-economic groups, and is summarized in Table 3.

TABLE 3. Gainful Workers, Classified by Social Economic Groups, 1930<sup>10</sup>

| GROUP                                  | PER<br>CENT |
|----------------------------------------|-------------|
| 1. Professional persons                | 6 0         |
| 2. Proprietors, managers and officials | 19 8        |
| 3. Clerks and kindred workers          | 16.3        |
| 4. Skilled workers and foremen         | 12 9        |
| 5. Semi-skilled workers                | 16 3        |
| 6. Unskilled workers                   | 28.7        |

The above and other data examined seem to warrant only the most general statements concerning the class distribution of the population of this country as a whole. The upper classes are obviously rather limited in size, comprising perhaps from 3 to 5 per cent of the population; the lower classes easily account for from one half to two thirds; the middle classes account for the remainder. Owing to the selective character of the distributive population forces in many communities, local variations, often in marked degree, would be rather numerous.

Four other distinguishing features of the American class system should be noted briefly. One is its ethnic coloring. In certain parts of the country, particularly the North and East where the immigrant stream of past decades largely congregated, social stratification coincides with, and is reinforced by, ethnic differences. Two recent studies throw light on this relationship. The first is Warner and Lunt's summary for "Yankee City." Although half of its population in 1930 was of foreign white stock, the upper upper class is wholly of Yankee origin, and the lower upper class admits only a few older Irish families. To the two middle classes some French, Jewish, Italians, and Armenians are admitted; there is a small sprinkling of Greeks, and almost

<sup>10</sup> Alba M. Edwards, *A Social-Economic Grouping of the Gainful Workers of the United States*, Government Printing Office, Washington, 1938.

no Poles and Russians. More than half of the Greeks, and about three-quarters of the Russians, nine-tenths of the Poles, and all the Negroes are in the lower lower class.<sup>11</sup> The second study is of Burlington, Vermont, made by Anderson.<sup>12</sup> This work shows a fine appreciation of the role of ethnic differences in the class system and of how deeply rooted these differences are, continuing past the second and third generation. Particularly significant is it that the social and religious life of these people, as well as the marriages, are confined largely to their own ethnic group.

Another characteristic of the American class system is the extent to which class and ethnic distinctions are reinforced by religious differences. The United States has been historically a Protestant country, the overwhelming proportion of its earlier settlers being of that persuasion. Since 1880, however, a very large proportion of the immigrant stream has been Roman Catholic, and to a lesser extent, Jewish and of other religious beliefs. As a result, the newer ethnic groups and the less economically established elements particularly in certain sections of the country belong to non-Protestant groups. What gives added significance to this fact is that the deepest roots of religion are cultural rather than theological. Not infrequently, therefore, the religious organization expresses the integrity of a group and its distinctiveness from another group, as, for example, in the case of the Irish whose Catholicism is a symbol of their separateness from the English.

A third characteristic of the American social class system is its relative mobility, i.e., the extent to which there is movement up and down the social ladder. Although the majority of individuals in this country remain in the class into which they are born,<sup>13</sup> there is general agreement that class lines are less sharply drawn and changes in class status are more frequently achieved here than in most other countries. This is due to a number of historical factors—the relative youth of the country, its democratic traditions, the existence of free or cheap land, the rapid development of capitalistic business enterprise, and the continuing influence of the frontier with its attendant renewal of pioneer culture. There is considerable evidence to warrant the judgment that, with advancing national maturity, class lines in the United States are destined to become both more obvious and more rigid. This seems to be happen-

<sup>11</sup> Warner and Lunt, *op. cit.*, chap. 9.

<sup>12</sup> Elin L. Anderson, *We Americans*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1938.

<sup>13</sup> P. A. Sorokin, *Social Mobility*, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1927.

Being a child is a dangerous occupation. Despite recent reductions in infant mortality rates, the death rate of children in the earlier age groups is relatively high. These early life hazards, however, are not evenly divided. They vary in part on the basis of class differences. Much is made on this point of the older tables that have been compiled by the Federal Children's Bureau, showing how infant mortality varies with the earnings of the father. But the story is much broader than this, as more complete analyses of the causal factors in infant mortality clearly show. In addition to income, the role of intelligence, education, leisure, work habits, family habits, nursing, and feeding procedures is all a part of the story. When these and other causal factors are taken together, one sees them as only so many aspects of the family's mode of life, i.e., of its class or cultural level.

These same selective factors influence sickness rates; hence the entire health aspect of child life varies on a class basis. Persons in the lower classes are sick more frequently; their sicknesses are of longer duration and tend to be more disabling; the adequacy of medical attention may be less, so that the sequelae of the major sicknesses at least are also more frequent and more serious. With these differences go other class differentials. The nature of the family insight into the child's health problems and their implications for his daily life; the availability of resources, other than medical, for dealing with these problems; the possibilities of working out satisfactory life adjustments—all of these tend to vary on a class basis, so that some children tend to enter adolescent and adult life much better equipped in a physical way than others; and there is every likelihood that these differences vary considerably from one class to another.

#### CLASS VARIATIONS IN FAMILY STRUCTURE

One of the most clearly established facts in contemporary population data is the variation in the size of the family of procreation from one social group to another. More extended discussion will be given to differentials in fertility in a later chapter; it suffices here to point out that to some considerable extent these variations occur on a class basis. This is probably most true when the broader threefold division into upper, middle, and lower classes is utilized, and with particular reference to the economic basis of the class structure. What differences obtain when a sixfold class structure like that of Warner and Lunt is utilized, and when broadly cultural rather than specific economic

factors are emphasized, we cannot say with precision. This is a research task for the future. By way of general summary, however, there is substantial reason to conclude that as one moves from the lower lower to the upper upper class, he finds increasingly that children live as part of a small-family system. This means, basically, that there is a class differential in the size of the child's most intimate socializing group. The Law of Family Interaction, presented in Chapter VII, permits a more concise consideration of this fact.

A second aspect of the family structure that seems to vary on a class basis is the composition of the family household unit. Are children in the upper classes reared prevailingly in homes occupied only by the family of procreation? Is the family of orientation more prevalent among the lower classes? Does the larger kinship group appear in the same household more frequently in the lower classes? Here again it is impossible to write with satisfactory precision; but on the basis of economic differences as well as of ethnic factors, all these questions can be answered in the affirmative. Speaking generally, the immediate family and the procreative form of it tend to prevail in the upper classes because financial circumstances permit, and in the middle classes, in large measure, because ambition dictates; in the lower classes, however, larger families, lower incomes, and shorter working-life spans necessitate in greater measure the inclusion of kinfolk in the household unit. These differences, combined with differentials in space per person within the home, have great meaning in the child-rearing process.

#### THE SETTING OF FAMILY LIFE

The phrase, the setting of family life, has reference to certain conditions and circumstances in the living quarters of families which have particular significance in the operation of everyday family life. Those bearing more directly upon child development will be described briefly.

There is, to begin with, the physical appearance of the home; that is, how it looks and compares with other homes, both inside and out. This really involves a dual comparison: first, with homes of other families within the person's class, and second, with homes in general. Such comparisons are related to the conception which members of a family have of themselves and of their relations to others. How early this factor operates in child development is debatable. As this volume is being written, an eleven-year-old boy volunteers the observation, in

answer to a neighbor's comment that his home is attractive: "Yes, it's a nice feeling to live here."

Second, there are the number and size of rooms in the home, particularly in relation to the number of members in the family. Does each person have his own room? If not, how many share a bedroom? Its drawer space? The living room? It is significant to note the extent to which the members of the family, particularly the children, have an opportunity within the home to be by themselves, to have their own bedroom, bed, drawer space, room to study, room to listen to their own choice of radio program, and to what extent these must be shared constantly with others.

Does the family own its home? Are the words *my* or *our* applied constantly, even if unconsciously, to the place in which the child grows up? Or are his relationship to his home, and the behavior of the adults which he observes, those of the renter? It is commonly understood among persons competent to make the comparison, that the behavior patterns of home-owning families differ in many respects from those of renters, particularly in their treatment of the home in which they live, and that in many instances the differences are marked. "Acting like a renter" is a common expression in certain parts of the country.

Home ownership is related closely to duration of occupancy, and both must be thought of as having particular importance, not only for the feeling (or lack) of permanence of family life, but also for the degree of the child's sense of security. The study of feelings of security or their lack might well begin with the mobility of families which have young children. Growing up in physical surroundings which remain relatively unchanged may be a basic factor in the development of the child's sense of having a place of his own in the larger scheme of things.

Again, there are what are here called the *facilitating aids* in home life. This term is used to indicate the range of material equipment and services whose presence or absence affects the atmosphere and tempo of home life, particularly the processes of child development. These include servants in the home; mechanical appliances of a labor-saving nature; specialized rooms, such as game rooms, study nooks, space for a laboratory set or a hobby; the number of radios and victrolas; and home recreational facilities. Factors of this kind determine not only the child's activities within the home but also, often, the whole nature of parent-child relationships.

Just as there are facilitating aids, so there are special handicaps which hamper normal family life. Many families live in a physical setting which presents particular difficulties for children—cramped apartments, lack of play space, a home dominated by adult activities, fastidious concern with household furnishings, and the like.

Another special phase of the setting of family life is the degree to which purely family relations and parent-child relations are isolated from other activities of the members. There are families, as in some suburbs of large cities, in which the family life of their members is cut off almost entirely from other activities. Business or "the office" is not brought home, even on the telephone. In other cases, by contrast, storerooms, professional offices, candy shops, display rooms, etc., are operated in the home and their activities constantly intrude, on both a time and a space basis, upon the family's life. The writer recently observed the home of a physician; there were patients in all the downstairs rooms save the kitchen, they were using the upstairs toilet room, and peeping occasionally into other rooms on the second floor. Both of the adolescent children in this family present special scholastic problems.

Finally, there is the spatial relation of the home in relation to other homes. How near in terms of distance do other families live? How near in terms of sound? How much separateness and distinctness of family life are possible, measured in terms of the physical setting of the home? These and other aspects of the physical setting of home life vary a great deal from one social class to another, with the result that family and child life flourish under significantly different conditions.

In the upper classes, children tend to be reared in families which, in their physical setting, give them "a nice feeling to live here." Homes or apartment buildings are attractive on the outside, and are well furnished inside. Many of them have "an air" about them. They are not just houses, they are homes. The children have their own rooms, each child usually having his own bedroom, clothes closet, drawer space, and toys. This is true from infancy on, and must be related to the development of the child's sense of possession. It means, too, that the child can be by himself at least part of each day, and that there is an opportunity to develop a sense of personal inviolability. The percentage of home ownership is high. Often, especially in the case of the upper upper class, the home may be the ancestral home. Or, if not, it is one with a history, and a status in the eyes of the community. Families



tend to remain settled, although in recent years a migratory executive group, well salaried and living on upper-class levels, has appeared in many urban areas. For the most part, however, there is a relative continuity of the home background during the child's life. Servants are present to assume responsibility for many of the chores of housekeeping, which means that there is leisure for family life and for parent-child relationships of an even, unhurried sort. There is time for the amenities of life and for social entertainment. Parents have more time and greater reserves of nervous energy to aid their children in meeting specific problems. There is more opportunity for the parents to help them in properly assessing their experiences. There are other facilitating aids. Specialized rooms for different activities are available for the child and his friends. As a result, upper-class children organize a large part of their activities in terms of their own and their friends' homes. The relative isolation of their home life from the intrusion of adults and from the homes of neighbors also facilitates this. The sleep of upper-class children tends to be less disturbed by home and neighborhood noises; in fact, one of the striking facts to be noted here is that many routine phases of child rearing can be better provided in upper-class homes because of the absence of competing disturbances.

Middle-class home life and child rearing share many of the advantages found among the upper classes. Especially is this true of the upper middle class. To cover the situation as a whole, it may be said these advantages are present in the upper middle class, but less often, and with the more frequent intrusion of complicating factors. Middle-class homes are smaller, with fewer rooms, often less attractive to the eye, and furnished with less elegance if not in poorer taste. The percentage of home ownership is smaller, particularly so in the lower middle class; the duration of occupancy is correspondingly shorter. The physical background of the middle-class child tends to be less stable, which perhaps leads to a resultant lessened sense of security. Professional and business activities of the adult members of the family are more likely to be brought into the range of home activities. Middle-class children are less insulated from the competing activities of their fellows, on the basis of both the physical setting of their homes and the social barriers of their class. In regard to the conditions of middle-class family and child life, there is this fundamental generalization to be made, that members of the upper middle class tend to approximate the

upper classes, and members of the lower middle class, the lower classes of the Warner and Lunt classification.

Anything that may be said concerning family and child culture at the lower class levels must recognize the ethnic inclusions of these classes, particularly in the North and East, and the heavy Negro representation in other areas where they seem to constitute a class rather than a separate caste. Both our more recent immigrant groups and the northern Negroes are at a stage in their historical development in which most of them have a lower class status. Speaking generally, these classes have the least attractive home setting as a rule. Most of the homes are small dwellings or apartments; the rooms are smaller in size and fewer in number, and the families are larger. As a result, the members of these families live much more "on top of each other," "get into each other's way" a great deal more, are compelled from the beginning of their life to share much more than children in other classes. Lower-class homes do not permit the "atomic" existence that is so readily possible in upper-class homes. Again, lower-class homes are less often in good functioning order, and these deficiencies have a way of intruding into the range of family living. The child is much less able to organize his activities in the home; his home often is not attractive enough to invite his friends, even if other facilities permitted. The percentage of home ownership is low; the duration of occupancy, relatively brief; the behavior patterns of the renter, often manifest. Frequent changes of residence require corresponding adjustments—making new friends, finding a place in a new neighborhood, fighting your way in a new school. Finally, lower-class homes are not insulated, or isolated—the street is outside the window, the neighbors are on the other side of thin walls, neighborhood feuds are common, there is less quiet and relaxation.

#### THE BOND OF KINSHIP

The term, bond of kinship, is used here to cover the nature and role of intra-kinship relations and attitudes, with particular reference to the child. Three aspects will be emphasized: (1) the family's attitude toward the child; (2) the relations between the immediate family and the larger kinship group; and (3) the sense of family solidarity. In each of these, significant class differentials are apparent.

*The Family's Attitude Toward the Child.*

1. The attitude of upper-class families toward the child is characteristically one of possessive pride and hope. This is a product in large measure of two factors. The first is family pride, pride of present achievements or past histories or both; the second is the economic means enabling one to luxuriate in the satisfactions of parenthood. Children therefore tend to be wanted in specific numbers to guarantee and fortify the family position, but to be limited to the number in keeping with the family's capacity for child rearing on its class plane. The child is regarded, commonly and consciously, as the carrier of the family name, its traditions, heritage, and status. Fathers who have established businesses, for example, expect or hope their sons to carry on; mothers with an assured social position are concerned as a rule that both sons and daughters will maintain it, if not better it.

This fundamental attitude toward the child, coupled with the relative ability to carry the costs of child rearing and the facilitating aids in the home, all combine to work for a pleasant home life and for high standards of child care. The child receives the best that the family knows of, his development is closely watched, and he is received early on a basis of equality. Coupled with this care and interest is a strong sense of group pressure in the child's development. Upper-class children are expected to measure up to the class culture and to the traditional performance at the level of their particular family. In fact, as the child grows into maturity, he is given to understand that he must not merely retain the family place but, if a male, he must retain or regain the material resources required, and, if a female, "marry them." Four further facts may be noted about these family pressures. First, the selective factor which operates most strongly is social prestige; there is much less concern about the moral aspects of behavior. Second, the higher up one moves on the social scale, the stronger these family pressures become. Similarly, as the child grows older, the stronger the pressure becomes. Finally, there is the important fact that at the upper-class level these pressures derive not only from the immediate family but from the whole range of kinsfolk. In many cases, this includes kinsfolk who are dead. "What would your Grandmother Elson say?"

Many of the problems peculiar to upper-class children are the result, directly and indirectly, of these pressures. Children may not have the ability to measure up to the level of their family's performance. After all, the next generation has a biological heritage of abilities and dis-

abilities partially different from that of the parent. Or the children may not possess the health or energy needed to function at the family level. There may not be the interest or inclination to do so. Again, parents and other kinsfolk may fail to realize that situations have changed and that what they expect is both difficult and futile. Persons familiar with the problems of students in universities and professional schools know the number, variety, and often the tragic role of these family pressures.

2. Family attitudes toward the child in the lower classes are in sharp contrast in many respects. To begin with, lower-class parents, while not lacking in love and affection for their children, tend to regard them as a sort of inevitable price which fate exacts in payment for sex relations. This is acceptable up to a certain point, when the chief concern comes to center upon their number. With incomes and housing facilities sharply limited, each additional child, after a given point is reached (and it is reached early in the family's life), takes on elements of a crisis. At these class levels, particularly the lowest one, there is little knowledge of satisfactory contraceptives or of the means of securing them, and often little interest in their use. Coupled with this is the strong emphasis upon the sex side of marital life. Out of this combination grows in large measure not only the multitude of tragic family problems which plague lower-class families but also the prevailing attitudes toward and treatment of their children.

Furthermore, the whole nature and role of the family structure is different among the lower classes. There naturally is less family pride, less concern for the continuance of family status and traditions. More than that, the family is a less permanent structure. The rate of disorganization is much higher. There is more divorce, more desertion, and a far larger number of transitory illegal unions. The changing of sex mates, with or without benefit of clergy, is far more frequent in the lower classes.

The natural result of this is what one also finds in the more primitive cultures: the prevalence of the mother-centered child. The lower-class child is largely reared by the mother, even if punished chiefly by the father. Through the changing vicissitudes of family relationships, the children tend to go with the mother, and to stay with her in case of remarriage or a new union of a less conventional kind. Because of this, as well as of the higher death rates among parents in the lower classes, the relative number of cases of stepchildren and child de-

pendents is high at these levels. In case of the mother's remarriage or new alliance, the children become the responsibility of the new father, with no help as a rule from the natural father. Since the economic means of the mother and of the acquired "father" are both limited, the children of earlier unions tend to be a source of constant irritation and conflict, with a resulting disordering of their personalities. Family situations of this kind are the source of many of the personality problems which prevail in the lower classes.

The chief emphasis in lower-class child rearing is upon not being an annoyance or a nuisance. Children must keep quiet and not disturb the adults in the home or the neighbors nearby. The reasons for this emphasis are obvious. Houses or apartments are small, families are large, walls are thin, neighbors are close. Many people must live within a small area, the adults are occupied with the pressure of making a living, and the children must be trained to adjust to the requirements of these conditions. What this really means for the child has been well stated by Davis and the Gardners: "In a sense, there is no 'child's world' in the lower classes; children are expected to behave as adults at an early age. Fewer concessions are made to immaturity, and the child's pattern of behavior differs from the adult pattern less than in other class groups."<sup>15</sup>

Such emphases and purposes in child rearing naturally lead to a considerable premium upon obedience and on the further virtue of promptness. The well-brought-up child is the one who "stops what he is doing," and at once. In securing this promptness and obedience, the chief reliance is upon physical punishment. Since often this is administered by the male head of the family, and since the number of stepchildren in these classes is relatively high, the effect upon "father"-child relations is again obvious.

A second emphasis in lower-class child rearing is upon being helpful. Children are taught early to run errands, to do chores, and to assume responsibility for the care of the home and the other children. Lower-class daughters become "little mothers" early in life; where circumstances permit, boys are expected to go with father and help him. Here, again, necessity is crowned as a virtue. Children are reared, not with an eye to the development of their capacities, but to meet the dictates of the family's need. It is at this point that lower-class family

<sup>15</sup> Davis, Gardner, and Gardner, *op. cit.*, p. 129.

standards and the requirements of child labor and compulsory school attendance laws conflict.

3. The attitudes of middle-class families toward the child range between the two already noted, with some marked distinctions between the upper and lower divisions. Here, as in other cases, the upper middle class tends more in the direction of the upper classes, and the lower middle class approximates the attitudes and values of the lower classes.

The child in middle-class families is wanted, perhaps, chiefly as a form of marriage fulfillment. There is, however—especially in the upper middle class—marked interest in planned parenthood through the use of contraceptives. Family limitation is desired, not generally as a matter of sheer economic necessity as in the lower classes, but as an aspect of family planning. The number of persons to plan for is the basic criterion of the planning process.

But there is a second aspect of the middle-class family's attitude: the fact that the child is seen as the possibility of the fulfillment of hopes. Reference has been made to this in an earlier chapter; it is pointed out here that such cases are probably most prevalent in the middle-class groups. This fact has a particular bearing upon family conceptions of child rearing.

The chief emphasis in child rearing in the middle classes grows out of their place in the class configuration. Above them is the appraising challenge of the upper classes; below, the enticing envy of the lower classes. The former stand ready to reject them; the latter threaten to engulf them. The natural result is a marked emphasis upon "appearances," upon "what people will say" and "how things will look." The middle-class code thus becomes one of rigidly controlled behavior, with a strong insistence that children conform to the formalized patterns of behavior.

Obviously, this cannot be brought about by physical punishment alone. Children at this class level are more likely to be reasoned with, the values of such conduct are pointed out, self-interest is appealed to, non-physical forms of discipline are invoked. Although child rearing in the middle classes is of necessity carried on largely by the mother, there is considerable cooperation from the father. There are family consultations, definite programs are initiated, outside help may be solicited. Here are the parents who take children to clinics, who go to hear lectures, who want to read books on "child psychology." Many of

these parents become confused and others become skeptical in their effort to substitute these newer methods for the old-time disciplines; unfortunately some, in their despair, reduce their efforts to a minimum.

*The Relationship Between the Immediate Family and the Larger Kinship Group.*

The immediate family's relationship with the kinship group is a fundamental factor in the family background of the child, and it varies considerably on a class basis.

1. The upper-class pattern, particularly of the upper division, is quite definite. The kinship group rather than the immediate family tends to be the focal point and the ultimate consideration in the life of its members. Pride in the family name stems from the history of the larger group; individuals and immediate family units bask and share in its reflected glory; to it rather than the immediate family is given prior loyalty. It is within the kinship group that a general pattern of behavior develops which sets the norms for its constituent members; to it the immediate family unit is subordinate.

This type of relationship is perhaps most strongly developed in the area of the old South, and its nature and social significance can best be studied there. Its clarity and frequency in other parts of the country vary a good deal, depending upon the age of the region and the horizontal mobility of the upper-class population, as well as its vertical mobility. Its relative importance also is probably less in the lower upper class, since the families at this level are more recent arrivals in the social sense, and have less of an idealized past in terms of family history to utilize and exploit.

Some of the significant implications of this dominance of the kinship group will be stated briefly. First, it involves pressure upon the immediate family to conform to the general kinship behavior patterns, with particular reference to the field of child rearing. Second, it follows that relatives share to some extent in the process of child rearing. The role of grandparents is considerable, especially of those who are the particular personification of the family glory or the holder of the family fortunes. Third, there is much emphasis upon respect for older relatives, which comes to be generalized into respect for one's elders. Fourth, the "family's" influence in the choice of matrimonial mates is great, as it is also in the choice of professional or business careers. Fifth, close relations with the circle of kinsfolks are common after marriage.

Sixth, as the younger members of the family grow up, there is emphasis upon the examples set by earlier members in regard to community, political, military, and other forms of public service. This emphasis, so marked in older cultures where vestiges of feudal life and the responsibilities of the liege lord prevail, is perhaps less operative in American life. It may develop as a phase of the democratic way of life in this country as time goes on.

2. The middle classes put more emphasis upon the immediate family, although there is a considerable variation between the extreme ends of this social span. In general it may be said that as we go from the top of the upper middle class toward the lower classes, the immediate family grows in importance as the focal unit in the life of its members.

Two basic factors possibly account for its relative position in the middle classes. The first is the individualizing aspect of middle-class life, with its emphasis upon individual effort, achievement, and acceptance of responsibility in the democracy of the home. The particularizing of relationships with kinsfolk is thus only another phase of the same tendency. Second is the fact that middle-class families are socially mobile; many of them have "arrived" recently, and many hope to move higher. This means that collateral branches of the same kinship group have acquired a differing status. Families living in the city have "country" relatives; prosperous families have poor relatives; "newly elegant" families have crude cousins. This tends to be particularly true of members of ethnic groups who have recently acquired middle-class status. The combined effect of these two factors is to make for a rather highly selective process in the relations between the middle-class immediate family and its wider circle of kinsfolk.

The implications for child development follow correspondingly. The middle-class child is reared by his parents; relatives are not expected to interfere. His attitude toward relatives is individual, not general and inevitable. Choices involving the child's training and career and his matrimonial mate are made within the immediate family. Relations between generations after his marriage are dictated more by mutual respect than by "family" duty.

3. In the lower classes, too, the focal point is the immediate family; its relative lack of permanence has been referred to previously in this chapter. What importance attaches to the larger circle of kinsfolk is called forth by the needs of its members, and not as a rule by their



sharing in an idealized past. The form taken by this relationship beyond the immediate family is most frequently a close association between brothers and sisters, who after marriage may live near each other and share their common problems and experiences.

There are, however, notable exceptions to what has just been said. These are found chiefly in the ethnic groups in our larger cities, where the lower-class status coincides with Old World vestiges of kinship family structures. Reference to this will be made in subsequent chapters dealing with culture conflict situations. But even in these families, the secondary group life prevalent in contemporary urban centers has tended to dissolve the cohesive bonds of these extended family structures, so that the younger generation tends to ignore them even as their elders seek tragically to maintain them.

### *The Sense of Family Solidarity.*

Family solidarity is an intangible thing, however tangible its manifestations may be from time to time. On the positive side it may be defined as a consolidation or union of interest of the members of a family; on the negative side it involves chiefly the rendering of aid in time of crisis. Thus conceived, some sense of solidarity prevails in every family; the chief concern here is with significant variations in its nature or extent from one class to another.

1. In the upper classes, family solidarity is a product primarily of the self-interest of its members. Three factors in its production readily suggest themselves. First, there often exists in upper-class families common participation in business or other projects; second, there are often family fortunes to conserve; and, third, there is the family honor or good name which must be preserved. In time of crisis, the family prestige must be preserved; in good times, it must be enhanced. The family name is a stock in trade whose value must be protected; this is the common interest of the upper-class family. What the family does for its children, and what is expected of the younger generation, is dominated by considerations of this kind.

2. Family solidarity in the middle classes is more voluntary, social, and selective. It seems more like the friendly participation of independent persons, rather than the common effort of the crew of a smart yacht. Possibly economic considerations are effective here. Middle-class families are concentrated largely in the stabilized occupations. They are members of the professional and salaried groups. There is a

relative security, even if not an imposing amount, of family income. Middle-class families tend to participate with relative adequacy in the insurance features of modern life; there is as a rule some surplus to draw on. The result of all this is that crisis situations are less prone to arise in the middle classes, and no class pattern develops in this respect.

3. Family solidarity in the lower classes is characterized chiefly by three facts. First, it concerns itself for the most part with crisis situations. These are common in lower-class families. Needs are urgent and have to do often with the essentials of life—food, shelter, and refuge in case of illness. Furthermore, these families are large in size. Responsibility for aid in time of crisis is expected and generally accepted. Second, family solidarity tends to be matrilinear. This is the result of what has already been said concerning the relative role of the mother. Not only is she a more constant factor in the family's life, but she is also more often the basic person involved in the need situation. Reciprocal demands between mother and child, and the demands of the sister upon her brother, are more common. Third, there is again the pattern of family solidarity in lower-class ethnic groups where there is the relative subordination of the individual, particularly the individual child, to the family group, and the ideal of economic security for family members through family solidarity.

#### THE EDUCATIONAL PATTERN

In discussing the educational process as an aspect of child development, something broader than classroom instruction is implied. The term educational pattern is used to identify this broader concept, and includes such elements as the linguistic equipment which the child obtains in the home, the family attitude toward education, the nature of the school curriculum, the length of the school experience, the child's social status in the school world, and the values emphasized in the course of school life. Variations in these and other elements on a class basis are obvious in the educational pattern, and serve both as an expression of the social stratification in the adult world and also as the mechanism for its perpetuation.

1. Reference has been made in a preceding chapter to class differentials in the linguistic culture. Upper-class children come to school with a language equipment which both adequately serves their school progress and promptly identifies their social background. The words used, the habits of expression, the shades of meaning, the subtleties of

expression, the range of topics discussed, all reveal the upper-class home training. The importance of education is taken for granted. It is the thing to do. Going to college is looked forward to, not only in preparing for a vocation but also in equipping one with the interests and standards of his class. Curriculums are selected and shaped toward this end. Upper-class children for the most part go to private schools—boys to private preparatory schools and girls to finishing schools that have preparatory and collegiate features. Throughout this school process, the child is indoctrinated with the attitudes, manners, rituals, and routines of his class. Upper-class children usually do not work while going to school. Financial allowances tend to be adequate, although as a rule they are more conspicuously generous in the lower upper class.

A problem in parent-child relationships frequently results from the fact that children from the upper upper and the lower upper classes go to the same private schools and mingle together. Somewhere en route in their school experience, the lower-upper-class children come to sense that their parents are not socially acceptable on the same plane as the upper-upper-class parents, or even the children in the latter class. This often leads to a situation in which lower-upper-class children develop attitudes of condescension or resentment toward their parents. This is apt to develop wherever children attain a status beyond that of their parents, but it tends to be more conspicuous in the upper class, by way of comparison with the subordination and respect shown by upper-upper-class children toward their parents.

2. In most communities the American public-school system is a middle-class product. Its teachers are drawn chiefly from this group, the language it utilizes in its instruction and the values it emphasizes are representative of the middle class. Its directive control is middle class. When the middle-class child goes to public school he goes into a typical middle-class institution. The linguistic equipment he brings from home fits into the school life, and without attracting attention to itself, Middle-class pupils and middle-class teachers speak the same language. Especially is this true when the children come from professional, semi-professional, and junior executive homes. There is more than a friendly attitude toward education; it shades into a marked emphasis upon its value, not as a social grace but as a tool with which to rise in the world, particularly in an economic or professional way. Middle-class children go to high school. They tend to elect classical and scientific courses; many plan to go to college. Where state universities,

scholarships, and stipends of various sorts are available, the percentage who go to college is high. The incidental values emphasized during their school experience, simply stated, are these: Behave yourself, do well in your studies, be a go-getter, search out all the facilitating aids that society offers for higher training, and you will get along in the world, i.e., raise your status.

There is a marked distinction between upper and lower middle-class children. Here again the upper division approximates the upper-class child, whereas the lower division has more in common with the lower-class child. Upper middle-class children are those in the upper class and often tend to outgrow sympathetic relations with their parents; lower-class children incline to give up the race, indulging in cryptic references to upper middle-class children as "thinking they are somebody" or "thinking they are too good for us." Lower middle-class children are more handicapped in their educational progress. Many of them work after school and on Saturdays. Home conditions are less favorable for study. Family difficulties tend more frequently to intrude. In the ethnic groups, bilingualism and cultural conflicts are present as complicating factors. A number of the children go to parochial schools and hence may be outside the public-school pattern in many ways.

3. Lower-class children have handicaps in their educational process from the very beginning. Their linguistic equipment is not that of the school. Words, grammar, forms of expression must be relearned. They identify themselves as lower class to teachers and pupils. Their home background tends to make them critical of or unsympathetic to the idea of education. Their milieu furnishes few incentives to the learning process which are not direct and obvious. The courses selected therefore are those designed for immediate and practical use. A large number of these children work during the school term, often to the point of interfering with their school work. Attendance is less regular than that of children in the other classes. The incidence of disturbances in the family background is high. Changes in schools attended are frequent. Retardation is more common. Economic pressure and lack of sympathy lead to an early withdrawal from school. The school's emphasis on "getting on in the world" is twisted into bitter cynicism. Lacking the middle-class graces, these children rationalize the situation by depreciating their importance. Delinquent behavior and contacts with "the law" on the part of either their parents or themselves are common.

Reference has been made to the parochial school in this discussion. Since the Roman Catholic Church has its greatest following in the ethnic groups who have mostly lower-class and lower-middle-class status, its role is largely confined to these class levels;<sup>16</sup> and that role is inevitably one of maintaining the cultural persistence of its clientele. It is the purpose of the parochial schools to keep alive the educational pattern of its religio-ethnic groups. Since this pattern is largely a variant culture-class pattern, its inculcation by these schools makes for the retention of the social distance between these groups and the remainder of the population, thus insuring the continuance of the former's lower-class status.<sup>17</sup>

#### SOCIAL ACTIVITIES AND PARTICIPATION

Class differences, so evident in the family and school life of the child, are fully maintained throughout the range of out-of-the-home activities.

1. The social activities of upper-class children tend to be full and varied. A wide range of choices is open to them, as a result of the economic position of their families, the relative leisure of the members of this class, and their ability to contact the necessary sources of information about interesting things to do. Sports are much emphasized, for sports' sake. There is concern with playing the game and, whatever else may betide, playing it well.

One of the distinctive features about the social activities of upper-class children is their relative exclusiveness. For them, social participation, no matter how full and varied, tends to be segregated. In their recreational pursuits, they go or are taken to areas, resorts, hotels, summer camps, etc., patronized by their own class. Although they mingle freely, it is with their own kind. Part of this aloofness, no doubt, is consciously created and maintained, but in large part it is the result of a sorting process carried out by like-minded and like-financed people. Common interests, common traditions, and common capacities make for a way of socializing which is exclusive.

By way of generalization, it may be said that the higher one goes

<sup>16</sup> Stanley Chapman, "Church Schools," *Journal of Educational Sociology*, February, 1945, pp. 340-351; Betty Smith, *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1943, p. 60, André Siegfried, *America Comes of Age*, Harcourt, Brace & Company, Inc., New York, 1927, p. 23.

<sup>17</sup> W. Lloyd Warner and Leo Srole, *The Social Systems of American Ethnic Groups*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1945, particularly chap. 8.

in the social scale, the more social distance is reinforced by geographical separation. Upper-class children tend to live in large houses with adequate surrounding space, in sections where they are in contact chiefly with children of their own class. Their whole manner of life is such as to insulate them, as it were, from contacts outside their class. Going to private schools, being driven to and from school by a chauffeur, a general lack, in normal times, of the need to use public conveyances, vacationing in exclusive summer camps or resorts—all are parts of the same pattern. It is essentially insulation against the rawness and rough edges of life.

2. If the social participations of upper-class children are exclusive, those of the middle class tend to be selective. Middle-class families on the whole do not have the resources to maintain the foregoing features of aloofness in the lives of their children, but they tend rigorously to impose standards of selection. In upper-class families, relative isolation accomplishes rather unconsciously what middle-class parents must achieve consciously, i.e., sorting out and selecting the proper associates and activities for their children; hence the superficial student may conclude that social snobbery is primarily a middle-class weapon.

Middle-class children utilize public (as opposed to private) facilities, although there is care to select suitable ones. The distinction between the upper and lower middle classes becomes noticeable here, as in the whole range of social activities. Upper-middle-class families tend to be much more discriminatory, calculating, and ambitious in the pressures which they exert upon their children, with the result that the children's activities are more purposive and have more of an air of strain and effort rather than sheer enjoyment.

Special mention should be made of the scientific interests and pursuits of many middle-class children, especially those in the upper middle class. This is clearly manifested in the high-school courses chosen by middle-class children, and is echoed in the hobbies and avocations of the adolescent stage. The reasons for this are fairly obvious. A rapidly changing and developing science is replete with the opportunities which are the basis of the middle-class hope of a rise in status.

3. The social participations of lower-class children may be characterized as residual. These children do chiefly what is available for them, which often is meager enough. Parents have neither the time, the leisure, nor the knowledge to be of much help; they are too preoccupied with their own problems and insecurities. True, there are selec-

tive factors at work here, but they operate within the confines of their class configuration. Ethnic considerations weigh heavily. Welfare projects, whose opportunities were once regarded with scant skepticism, are now considered a public service. Athletic and other recreational activities are particularly emphasized, both as a means of achieving individual status and also as an escape from the drab routine of lower-class existence. For lower-class children there is no insulation against the rawness and rough edges of life, only the immunity which comes from constant exposure.

#### FAMILY RANK ORDER

For purposes of a generalized summary, it has been somewhat assumed thus far that all the families in the same social class enjoy the same status. Actually, this is far from true. Each family tends to have a rank order in its class, and this order determines not only the extent to which the family is representative of its class culture but also its attitude toward other social classes and other families in its own class. Everyone with social experience can identify the family that fawns upon the families that obviously outrank them in their own class and treat with derisive scorn those in the class immediately below them. Lower-ranking families in the upper classes are under considerable pressure as a rule, feelings of insecurity manifest themselves in many ways, and the whole atmosphere of the home becomes one of extreme tension. In contrast are the middle-class families who are firmly established in the higher rank orders and who maintain their position with comfort and confidence, secure in the prestige of their relative rank order. The home atmosphere here may be one of ease and contentment. Finally, we may identify the upper-lower-class immigrant family, hard-working, living carefully, realizing its class status for the time being but hopefully anticipating the future. Here is a family obviously on the up.

The family's rank order in its class is of the highest importance in the creation of the psychic atmosphere of the home which psychiatrists are wont to emphasize in their study of juvenile behavior disorders.

#### THE CHILD AND HIS CLASS NURTURE

Two basic premises are inherent in the relationship between the child and his class setting. The first is that child rearing is the social mechanism in the maintenance of the class structure; the second, that child rearing is utilized as the chief social device for attaining a rise in class status. Each of these has great social significance.

*Child Rearing as the Social Mechanism in the Maintenance of the Class Structure.*

Social classes live in different worlds, and families reflect the world of their class. This world, or class culture, they transmit to their children from the beginning of the child's life. From infancy on, children are conditioned to certain modes of behavior, so that by the time they reach adulthood they have the techniques for living at their class level. Two further facts need emphasis. One is that this behavior includes relations not only with one's own class, but also with persons in other classes—or out-groups, as the sociologists term them. Second, this class culture includes ways of thinking as well as ways of doing. The child is reared in the mental world of his class; thus he absorbs, as from the air he breathes, the beliefs, prejudices, attitudes, and values which characterize his class.

An appreciation of this process explains the pervasive persistence of the class culture. So deeply ingrained and so strongly emotionalized is it that its hold upon the individual often exceeds the force of other cultural pressures. History is replete with examples where the class hold has been stronger than that of the ethos. A recent illustration comes from the history of France. There is much reason to believe that that country's debacle, and the development of Pétainism, resulted from the convictions of the dominant classes in France that coming to terms with the historic foe from across the Rhine was preferable to a rapport with Frenchmen of other classes. Similarly, in the United States there is the communist type for whom the Soviet Russia can do no wrong.

*Child Rearing as the Social Device for Attaining a Rise in Class Status.*

To most parents, children personify another chance at life achievement. From this it follows that the key to much parental effort in a country with a high rate of vertical mobility is a desire to secure for the child opportunities denied to the parents; and the driving force in parental pressure upon the child, to achieve a status the parent never attained. It is a definite feature of the American social class system that the child becomes the spearhead of parental ambition.

This creates many problems for American children, problems permeated by a series of cruel dilemmas. For the child who succeeds in attaining a status higher than his parent's, there is the problem of parent-child relationships. What inevitably follows is that successive generations find their lateral associates at different social levels. The



continuity of family life is broken. The price of vertical mobility is the disorganization of parent-child relationships. For the child who fails, there are frustration and the aftermath of isolation or bitterness, or both. Some of the failures reject their parents' class and the class to which they aspire rejects them, with the resultant loneliness of a social no-man's land. Others, dropping back to their original status, develop strong feelings of class bitterness. This ambition to utilize children to achieve a higher social status leads to much unhappiness, and for many children.

#### SUMMARY

1. The concept of class came into sociology from economic fields. Contemporary sociologists define class primarily in terms of status. It can also be thought of in terms of cultural levels.

2. Three social classes—upper, middle, and lower—are usually recognized. Recent studies have divided each into an upper and a lower division, and show a distribution that does not wholly conform to the figure of a truncated pyramid.

3. The American class system is characterized by (a) a decided ethnic coloring; (b) a background of religious differentials; (c) its relative mobility; and (d) the inclusion of a caste system.

4. Class differentials are both obvious and important in child development. They are manifest in (a) the child's chances of survival and health, (b) the family structure; (c) the setting of family life; (d) the bond of kinship, including the family's attitude toward the child, the relations between the immediate and the kinship group families, and the sense of family solidarity; (e) the educational pattern; and (f) social activities and participation.

5. The child's family not only is a member of a given class, but also has a rank order in that class, which has an effect upon the family life, particularly its psychic life.

6. Two basic processes inhere in the relationship between the child and his class setting. One is that child rearing serves as the social mechanism for the maintenance of the class structure; the other, that child rearing is utilized as the chief social device for attaining a rise in class status.

## THE MEANING AND TYPES OF STATUS

Considered specifically, a person has many statuses, as many as there are groups with whom he has relations. For example, John Smith as a practicing attorney has a status as a lawyer among the fellow members:

<sup>1</sup> For an excellent summary, in readable form, of features included in this discussion, the reader is referred to Ralph Linton, *The Study of Man*, D. Appleton-Century Company, Inc., New York, 1936, chap. 8; Kingsley Davis, "The Child and the Social Structure," *Journal of Educational Sociology*, December, 1940, pp. 217-230; Allison Davis, "American Status Systems and the Socialization of the Child," *American Sociological Review*, June, 1941, pp. 345 ff.; Ralph Linton, "Age and Sex Categories," *ibid.*, October, 1942, pp. 589-604; Talcott Parsons, "Age and Sex in the Social Structure of the United States," *ibid.*, pp. 604-613; Leonard S. Cottrell, Jr., "The Adjustment of the Individual to His Age and Sex Roles," *ibid.*, pp. 617-621.

of his guild, as a deacon in the Methodist Church, he has a status among churchgoers, especially among Methodists; as a Knight Templar, he has a status in the fraternal world; and as the burgess of his borough, he has a status in his suburban neighborhood. In addition to these particularized statuses, he has also a composite or general status, which is the emergent total of all the particular statuses and which represents his polar position in the generalized life of society.

It is generally assumed that the latter is the significant status, and under certain conditions this is so. However, in the specialized secondary group life of our larger urban centers, the particularized status is often the only one that is known within the group; hence to its members, it, rather than the general status, is the important one. It might be added here that one of the problems of the individual in contemporary secondary group society grows out of the rather complete distinctness between the various groups of which he is a member and within each of which he has a separate status. Many people have to make sharp adjustments as they pass from one group to another in which they hold widely differing statuses.

Another and basically important distinction is that between the ascribed and the achieved statuses. The ascribed statuses are those which are assigned to individuals on the basis of certain facts about them other than indicated ability. Some of these facts exist from birth; others follow in a more or less prescribed sequence during individual development. The importance of this, for child development, is that they can be predicted and trained for from birth. The achieved statuses, as the term implies, are those which must be earned. They are not assigned as a matter of course, but are left open to be attained through competitive individual effort.

#### FACTORS AND PROBLEMS IN THE ASCRIPTION OF STATUS

In organizing the outstanding factors in the ascription of status, we see that they seem to fall into two main groups. In the first are those which ascribe status to the individual child because of his membership in certain population groups. These factors may be thought of, for purposes of contrast, as operating along vertical lines, as ascribing a relative status to an entire population group. The factors of color, ethnic origin, and class readily suggest themselves. The second series may be thought of as operating horizontally, i.e., within each of the vertical categories. These include sex, age, age relationship, order of

birth, plural birth, and the like. Membership in a given kinship group runs through and serves as a connecting link between all of them.

### *The Color Complex.*

For one who takes a realistic view of life, color is one of the two factors which fix permanently, from the beginning of life, and in more ways than one, the status of the child. Associated with color are certain other physical traits which combine to constitute the essence of social visibility. These may be spoken of as the color complex. Here is a factor which determines the child's status as a world citizen, i.e., not only in relation to other color groups distributed throughout the world, but also in relation to well-defined color complex groups within the United States. Since the predominant color group here is white, this factor has particular meaning for children who are born into non-white groups.

The basis for the ascription of status to these non-white groups is a product in large measure of their history in this country. All the numerically important groups were brought here either as slaves or as less-skilled laborers. As a result, a definite status was assigned to them, with resultant attitudes on the part of the dominant group. In the course of time these attitudes hardened, became emotionalized and persistent. Since deeply rooted attitudes in the dominant culture change slowly, they are operative today to a marked degree.

### *Ethnic Origin.*

The ethnic factor operates along the lines of the color complex, except that it is neither so definite nor so pronounced. In the United States, the status significance of ethnic groups differs considerably from one group to another, and for the same group from place to place. Students of minority groups tend at times to overlook these variables in an apparent oversimplification of their problems. The status of the Irish as a group differs from that of the Poles, and that of the French Canadian may be quite different in Quebec from what it is in Connecticut. Here again one sees the role of historical development, as well as the divergence of the culture of the particular ethnic group from that of the dominant element. There is an extensive literature on minority group relations, and there is no thought here of summarizing it; the one point of emphasis is that the individual child has ascribed to him the status of his ethnic group at any particular time and place.

*Class.*

The factor of class has been discussed in the preceding chapter; it is mentioned here only to complete the threefold linkage of the factors which operate on a vertical basis, each involving large segments of the population.

*Sex.*

Sex is in many ways the simplest and most universally used of the reference points in the ascription of status. Sex is apparent from birth, it remains fixed for life, and all societies prescribe the various attitudes and roles on a sex basis. The age at which this differentiation begins, however, and the extent to which it develops vary from one culture to another. Parsons concludes that in this country the distinction develops relatively late and to a lesser degree than in many cultures, and that this is particularly true of sex privileges and responsibilities.<sup>2</sup> Whatever the time and degree, there is from the beginning of life an association, in the minds of the responsible members of society, of the two sexes with different functions, training, and responsibilities. The entire, even if intangible, weight of family and other group expectancies differs on a sex basis.

This sex typing of behavior and privileges is not only rigid and lasting but covers an extensive range. In most societies, the male is typed and trained for the superordinate role; the female, for the subordinate role, but with social allowances for certain forms of devious aggression against, or sabotage of, the male role. Modes of expressing fear and affection, as well as aggression, are socially typed for each sex. There are sex-appropriate language, clothes, gait, intonation of voice, play, recreation, and occupation. There is a noticeable difference in the control of the sex life, or events leading up to sex experience, girls being much more rigidly supervised in this respect. In this country, and probably in most societies, the crucial definition of the sex-appropriate role is formulated at adolescence, and it occurs earlier for girls than for boys.

It is, then, one of the essentials in the social development of the child that the social personality of each one shall match his sex in the biological sense; that is, boys must be boys and have masculine habits, and girls must have girls' habits. This typed behavior is largely a social creation. Earlier there was a good deal of rationalization to the

<sup>2</sup> Parsons, *op. cit.*, pp. 604-605.

effect that these different social roles were assigned on the basis of physiological differences, but their changing character from place to place and time to time can only mean that they are culturally determined. Similarly, they are socially enforced. The system of rewards for sex-appropriate and punishments for sex-inappropriate behavior constitutes a large part of the social code of any society. It operates with relative severity, begins early in the family's treatment of the child, and is reinforced later by the controls of the school, the gang, the social clique, and the adult world. For the child, particularly the female child, the road to prestige is paved with the rewards of observing the sex-appropriate code, especially as one moves from the lower to the higher social classes.

Reference has been made to the fact that the more crucial definitions of appropriate sex behavior are formulated earlier for girls than for boys. Perhaps this is due to the earlier maturing of girls, perhaps to a greater concern on the part of parents with the behavior of girls. At any rate it is at this stage that girls often withdraw from their easy camaraderie with boys of their own age and become interested in boys several years older. This creates a situation for the boys in the younger age group, which is aggravated by school systems that compel them and girls to attend the same classes. The boys are left "up in the air," as it were. Outraged male pride does its best—with attention-getting behavior, some so irritating and some so ludicrous to their elders, particularly their teachers. Keeping the two sexes together in the same classroom during these years probably creates and intensifies behavior problems for the teachers. The problem period usually extends from the seventh to the tenth grade, and in some cases beyond. "Perhaps sometime," writes Plant, "the schools which so loudly proclaim their interest in 'the whole child' will make at least a perfunctory bow to the marked biological difference in their groups at this age."<sup>3</sup>

### *Age.*

Another obvious, highly visible fact about the child is his age; and its use as a reference point in the ascription of status is as old and universal as that of sex. Unlike sex, it is a constantly changing condition and as a result cannot give rise to permanent lifetime statuses. Age

<sup>3</sup> James Plant, "Social Significance of War Impact on Adolescents," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, November, 1944, pp. 4-5.

works on a developmental basis, with each person passing through a series of positions and pressures on an age basis.

Age grading is much emphasized in primitive societies. The age grades constitute distinct groups whose members are especially identified. Definite ceremonial rites mark the entrance into and exit from each group. Behavior appropriate to the members of each group is defined and often ritualized, and each group is organized into a hierarchy. In this country, age grading is obviously present, but it is characterized by a certain informality and lack of ceremonial observance which, however, in no way detract from its reality and effectiveness. Much of the learning process of the contemporary American child comes through his experience in conforming to the requirements of his age group,<sup>4</sup> for each group has its own pattern of expected behavior, privileges, and opportunities. In brief, each age group has its own status.

To achieve conformity of behavior in the specific age category, a system of rewards and punishments is used. Ridicule or ostracism, particularly by the members of one's age group, is usually employed for not "acting your age." Similarly, there are rewards by way of increased authority, privileges, and opportunities for a prompt advance to the next age category.

Society utilizes all sorts of prestige symbols which operate on an age basis. A child's hair is cut differently from that of the adolescent and adult. A very young child sits at the table on a high chair; later he has an adult chair but sits on the side of the table. Upper-class homes may have a special dining room for children up to a certain age. Certain words and phrases are forbidden to children before they reach a certain age. The time for retiring at night, crossing the street alone, going out after dark, having your own door key—these are but a few of the many privileges which vary on an age basis.

Both home and school emphasize age as a reference point for behavior. Much of the competition among children for the parents' favor, and the parents' emphasis on child behavior, operates through a system of age privileges. To beat customary age privileges is to gain from the parents more recognition or responsibility than one's age accords. But the present-day school is our most thoroughly age-graded institution. With compulsory promotion now operating widely, there results

<sup>4</sup> John Dollard and Neal E. Miller, *Social Learning and Imitation*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1941, pp. 184-188.

a form of automatic age grading which has few parallels, even in primitive societies. In the social life of many elementary- and secondary-school children, there is wide variation in rank and clique behavior among children separated by only one-year age grades.

Certain problems of child behavior which grow out of the operation of the age factor in the ascription of status may be noted briefly. First, children differ markedly in their adaptation to the age hierarchy prevalent in the family's life, as well as in that of the larger society. Some children accept the customary age roles and move along with changes in them. Others strive desperately for the privileges of a higher age group. Still others retreat to the demands of a lower level. There is considerable reason to believe that the second group is the most likely to develop behavior problems, particularly during the adolescent period.

A second problem is the relative abruptness of change from one age category to another. This varies greatly from one society to another. In some it is very gradual, with no clear lines of demarcation from one to another. In others, "it is more nearly comparable to a string of beads, each period being set off sharply from those that precede and follow it."<sup>5</sup> In this country there are certain of the latter type of change. One is the sudden change for many children at the age of six from living entirely at home to going to school full time. The gradual transition through nursery school and kindergarten would seem to be much easier and more satisfactory. Even more abrupt is the change from a full-time school status, at ages 16 to 18, to full-time employment in the world of industry. This happens with particular frequency among upper-middle-class urban children. Rural children usually have no such difficulties.

A third problem grows out of the difference between the physical passage from childhood to maturity and the social transfer of the child to the status of adult. This problem does not arise in primitive societies which observe rites to signalize the outstanding landmarks in the life of the individual. In our society, the lack of such rites, combined with the high standards of compulsory school attendance and social protection, results in a situation in which grown young people retain the legal status of children long after they have become adults in other respects.

<sup>5</sup> Linton, "Age and Sex Categories," p. 602.



*Age Relationship.*

If age operates on a developmental basis with but temporary status, the age relationship between given persons remains fixed and carries with it the implications of a permanent status. "Will I always be two years younger than Betty?" wails a four-year-old. "Yes, always," replies the mother to her disconsolate daughter.

This age relationship is a status-fixing factor of tremendous significance in the relationship between closely associated persons. It has, for example, a very definite role in the kinship group structure. From birth on, each child has a fixed relationship, based on the age differential, with every other person in the prescribed kinship circle. This relationship covers a constant and comprehensive series of the detailed aspects of the life of the individual child, and of the adult as well. In the child's school life, this age relationship, reinforced by class affiliations and numerals, becomes the basis of much of the social life of students. Among the most frequent comments by one student about another are such as these: "Oh, she is in ninth grade," "He was a sophomore when I was a freshman," "She graduated the year before I did," "I was a grade ahead of her." How significant these comments are can be seen from the fact that they may be made in old age in reference to early school associates. It might be added that age relationship is a constant basis of status also in academic and professional circles.

*Order of Birth.*

Order of birth is in large measure only another name for age relationship, except that at times it has significance because of the particular order of birth in the family or social configuration as a whole. The middle child, and also the oldest and the youngest, may be said to have a status resulting from that fact, not covered wholly by the fact of age relationship. This was discussed in Chapter V.

*Primogeniture.*

Particular mention should be made of the special status, both legal and social, of the eldest child over the centuries. The source of this goes back far in human history, probably to religious conceptions of the special value or virtue of first fruits. Its social importance has been considerable, and in a variety of ways. First, it has been utilized as the general method of monarchical succession. Second, it has served the great landowning families in maintaining their position, through the

inheritance both of titles and of landed estates. For many centuries, especially during the feudal stage of history, this maintenance of unity in family estates served as a prop for the stability of the social and economic order. Third, its operation has made for family unity during long periods of time when lack of the principle and its resultant family unity could only have resulted in social disintegration. Fourth, it has tended within the family group to fix the occupation of the oldest male, as well as his range of responsibilities toward other members. Its importance has declined greatly in recent decades, in large measure because of the greater degree of security afforded by the larger society.

### *Plural Birth.*

The birth of more than one child at a time is rare enough mathematically and unique enough socially to result in the ascription of a special status for all multiple-birth children. This practice has been common throughout human history. In many primitive societies, the custom of putting twins and other multiple-birth infants to death is common and widespread. The reasons given for doing so are many and varied. They include the difficulty of rearing more than one infant at a time, and the belief that they are an evidence of the mother's unfaithfulness, the progeny of a dead person, a punishment for an offense committed by a clan member, or that they will keep the rain from falling. The idea that twin children possess extraordinary powers over nature, especially over rain and the weather, is particularly common. On the other hand, some primitive peoples consider multiple-birth children a happy omen, with the result that their coming is welcomed and they are regarded with reverence and respect. The basic idea seems to be that multiple births, being abnormal, have a special significance that is interpreted as malefic by some and as omens of good fortune by others.<sup>6</sup>

In our contemporary culture, most of these age-old interpretations have disappeared, except perhaps the common (but incorrect) belief that multiple births are due to successive copulations at the time of conception. The general significance attached to multiple birth today is wholly social—the assignment of a special social status. On the one side, this status involves an almost complete lack of individual identity

<sup>6</sup> Hutton Webster, *Taboo: A Sociological Study*, Stanford University Press. Stanford University, 1942, pp. 61–67, 101; Sir James G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, The Macmillan Company, New York, abr. ed., 1940.

A twin is never just John Smith or Mary Jones, but always one of the Smith or Jones twins. Similar, but more so, is the case with triplets, quadruplets, and quintuplets. On the more positive side, plural birth confers an attention-getting or publicity status which in certain cases is exploited by the parents or some other interested agency

### *Adoption.*

Adoption is a legal fiction by which an individual, usually a young child, who belongs by birth to one kinship group acquires an equivalent status in another one. It was very common in the earlier stages of cultural development, often occurring on almost a mass scale. This was due undoubtedly to such factors as a high death rate among younger parents, large families, and generally unsettled conditions of life which created large numbers of orphaned children. To meet this problem, large-scale rationalization developed the institution of adoption as a family duty and a social virtue. In other instances, as among the Romans, the prevailing emphasis upon family continuity emphasized the desirability of adoption for those cases where the barrenness of the wife meant the lack of a natural heir.

Adoption in this country seems to have been on the increase ever since the First World War. The details have been brought more and more under the regulation of the law and the surveillance of public authorities, to the end of safeguarding the dual process of conferring the privileges of parenthood upon the childless and securing a satisfactory home for the parentless. Thus protected, the status of the adopted child is one that has certain intangible social implications. These are indicated by such statements as the following: "Fred is one of the Smith boys. He is the adopted one." "The Browns have two children. You know, they are both adopted." "Mother, who really am I? What were my people like?" Such statements, and their significance, possibly vary considerably on a class basis.

### *Illegitimacy.*

Illegitimacy of birth affects the status of the child in many ways. Suffice it here to refer to the general conclusions of anthropological research that one of the universal social rules is that no child, if he is to have full legal and social status, shall be brought into the world save within the limits of socially approved arrangements. The history of childhood furnishes the complement to this, for it indicates how

throughout human history the child born outside of these socially approved limitations has had a special status as a social pariah. One of the most unpleasant aspects of man's inhumanity to man is the way in which the established order has vented its disapproval of the offending parents upon their helpless child.

### *Kinship Unit.*

Membership in the kinship unit is the initial factor through which the entire system of ascribed statuses operates. Not only is it the oldest, it is also the most universally accepted determinant of status. Originally, man obtains his status through his personal traits and exploits. Frequently, and in time, these come to be extended to his family, and then to his descendants. In a manner like the inheritance of biological traits and accumulated possessions, status is transmitted from one generation to another.

The ascription of status through membership in a kinship unit operates in several ways. First, the child has ascribed to him at birth a status within his kinship group. This involves the socialized pattern of his relations to his parents, brothers, sisters, and relatives to a certain degree of kinship. This is particularly significant because it involves his relationship with a whole series of persons with whom he will have, for a number of years, his most constant and intimate relations. These prescribed patterns are both positive, indicating how he is to act toward certain people, and negative and prohibitive, including what he may not do. In all societies the initial status of every normal individual, according to Parsons, is the child's status in a given kinship unit.<sup>7</sup>

Second, membership in the kinship unit determines the status ascribed to the child in relation to other kinship groups. In this way, the family serves as the vehicle through which ascriptions of the bases of the color complex, ethnic origin, and class are made, as well as the rank order in each of these categories.

### *General Importance of the Ascribed Statuses.*

An amazingly large part of the ordinary business of living is included in the operation of these ascribed statuses, particularly those of age, sex, and membership in the kinship unit. The relative importance of the ascribed statuses is not the same, however, in all societies. It

<sup>7</sup> Parsons, *op. cit.*, p. 604.

seems evident that in small and comparatively stable groups they are emphasized a great deal. In such societies, social habits are fixed, and the reciprocal patterns of behavior are so clearly defined that they are readily imposed upon the young child. His induction into his culture takes the form of his acceptance of the age, sex, and other subordinations which are involved. But in a large and rapidly changing society, reliance upon the ascribed statuses is more difficult. Old statuses become specialized and new ones appear; hence the family's initial role in introducing the child to the status system both is more complicated and comes to be shared with other agencies whose conceptions and emphases may also be different.

In addition to the customary differences in social complexity and rates of social change, a society sometimes passes through an age of iconoclasm when the status systems, among various other aspects of the social structure, are destroyed or recast. There may be a deliberate mass urge to let girls behave as boys do; young men are placed in authority over old ones, members of subject races are raised to pinnacles of power, and the common man is glorified to the exclusion of all others. These developments seem to take the form of outbursts so impulsive and irrational as to suggest that they are a therapeutic mass drainage of resentment against conditions far removed from their manifestations.

The problems involved in the socialization of the child, which is only another term to identify the adjustment processes of the individual, vary directly with the rate of change and the clarity with which the requirements of the ascribed statuses are defined. This clarity is increased by similarity between what a child is told and what he sees in practice, by lack of contact with other culture groups which maintain different ascribed status requirements, and by uniform conformity with the status pattern on the part of the adult members of the child's social world. In other words, if a child grows up in a society in which the patterns of reciprocal behavior are clearly defined and universally practiced, his socialization is relatively simple. The reverse of these conditions naturally increases the difficulties.<sup>8</sup>

#### ACHIEVED STATUSES AND THEIR ATTAINMENT

Every society has a number of statuses which are open to individual achievement. Their number and the difficulty of attainment vary a

<sup>8</sup> Leonard Cottrell, *op. cit.*, pp. 617-620.

great deal, as does their importance in the functioning of any particular society. Linton insists that most of the statuses open to achievement do not touch the business of living very deeply and that, although satisfying to the persons who achieve them, they are designed, from the standpoint of society, chiefly "to serve as bait for socially acceptable behavior or as escapes for the individual."<sup>9</sup> Such a judgment seems to run counter to the great emphasis on status achievement in this country, where the more recently arrived ethnic groups have been particularly concerned that the road to this end be kept open and that the status-achieving devices be made available to them. This makes all the more striking the relative absence, in the literature on status systems, of a consideration of the achieved statuses and the devices utilized to attain them. The subject has amazing ramifications and requires a vast amount of study and research. By way of a move in this direction, some status-achieving devices significant for the younger age groups are presented briefly.

### *Athletic Skill.*

Activities of an athletic nature play a large part in American life. This is true particularly in the segment of the population which is under 25 years of age. Much of the life of American youth is organized around scholastic and collegiate athletic programs, from which it follows that a considerable part of the comparative rating which takes place in the child's and youth's world is based on athletic achievement. Naturally this is more marked among boys than girls, and it is rather more significant in the lower than in the upper classes. This does not mean that there is less participation in sports among upper-class boys, for often the reverse is true. Reference is intended rather to the variations in the interpretation and exploitation of success in athletic competitions among the different classes. Thus upper-class children tend to engage in sports for sport's sake; lower-class boys, to achieve status, i.e., honors, social recognition, and prestige.

### *Artistic Achievement.*

Achievement in the arts operates somewhat along the lines of athletic ability, but is more significant for girls than for boys, and seems in many ways to be more effective as a status-achieving device. Warner has written about one aspect of this.

<sup>9</sup> Linton, *The Study of Man*, p. 128.

One of the usual methods by which the children of members of the lower groups raise themselves is to exercise various semi-artistic talents. So-called schools of dancing, music, and elocution are attended by such children where they learn how to tap dance, play a saxophone, or recite pieces. Such trained talents are utilized by the various associations, clubs, and lodges for their entertainment, and the growing youth comes to their notice and frequently to membership. He thus climbs out of his lower status to a higher group and stabilizes his rise by becoming a member of an association in a higher group. This method of rising is, of course, not confined to the lower groups. The middle and lower upper classes also use their occasional talents as equipment for raising their class participation. The wealthy son or daughter of a "recently arrived" textile manufacturer, after completing his or her training at one of the older colleges with its higher social prestige, goes to an art school in Paris, or trains his or her voice "on the continent," or goes to New York to learn to write. If such attempts succeed in launching a generally recognized artistic career, his status is raised and his sphere of behavior enlarged in the field of upper-class activity. If he fails, he frequently becomes emotionally unstable and in some cases develops psychoneurotic behavior.<sup>10</sup>

Success on the stage has been, for a long time, a short cut for many young girls to the achievement of a higher social status. In recent decades, radio and the movies have offered similar opportunities, and on an extensive scale. How effective artistic achievement of a high order may be as a status-achieving device is indicated by the fact that in "café society," so-called, the Social Registerite accepts only the equality of the artist.

### *Educational Attainment.*

"Go to school, study your lessons, and you won't have to work as I do"—so speaks the ambitious lower-class parent to his child. "Be an outstanding student, and you'll find your way to the top"—this is the advice of the middle-class parent. "Why, of course, Bill's going to the university," for both child and parent in the upper classes assume that this is the thing to do. These statements, at differing levels, express the American attitude toward education. Education everywhere is an outstanding agency chiefly to raise status and, incidentally, to prevent loss of it. It is part of the American creed that intellect and talent can be educated and therefore improved, that people doing so should be re-

<sup>10</sup> Warner, W. Lloyd, "Formal Education and the Social Structure," *Journal of Educational Sociology*, May, 1936, p. 520.

warded, that the rewards should include prestige and money, which can be transformed into social status.<sup>11</sup>

In the United States, all of this becomes particularly significant because of the mass migrations into this country. Education has been utilized, on the one hand, by us to assimilate the masses of European children, and on the other by these children and their parents to raise their own status. In other words, for them our system of public instruction ceases to be a vehicle for transmitting the accumulated traditions and skills of the group, and serves instead to develop new cultural values, new loyalties, and in many cases a status higher than that of the parents. This is most marked in the field of higher education, which is being profoundly influenced and possibly even transformed in certain areas under the impact of larger numbers of second-generation American students. The application of these students is unusual, in selected aspects of the higher education pattern; their hopes are particularly forward-looking; their expectation is specific. There is particular concern with the prestige symbols in education, such as grades, honors, and degrees. The doctor's degree is especially esteemed; and colleges of pharmacy and the like, in which its attainment has been relatively easy, have proved particularly attractive, as enrollment data clearly indicate.

It should be emphasized, however, that this interest in education as a status-achieving or -maintaining device is not confined to any nativity group in the population. A large proportion of the students in the American educational system, as well as their parents, regard a school or college as a place to go to make advantageous contacts, to gain the proper entree, to get in with the right people, and ultimately to secure the right of identifying themselves with a particular institution, as one of its accredited representatives. Many educators do not like to face these implications.

### *Group Membership.*

The joiner is a product of an open class system, and this device is utilized early in the child's life, when membership in certain groups is sought in order to raise his status. This may begin early with enroll-

<sup>11</sup> W. Lloyd Warner, *Environment and Education*, Supplementary Educational Monograph No. 59, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1942, pp. 16-28.



ment in a given Sunday school, or later with confirmation in a given church. Later, there are selected dancing classes, private schools or particular public schools, social clubs, high-school and college fraternities, and cliques. This aspect of the child's socialization will be discussed in a subsequent chapter; the reference here is solely to their utilization as status-achieving devices.

### *Place of Residence.*

Early in life, status comes to be assigned on the basis of place of residence. The right and wrong sides of the railroad track are identified for children almost from the time they enter school; the comparative status of selected areas in large cities and suburbs becomes known to most children as a by-product of competitive school athletics, as well as of their mixture in centrally located high schools. All of this is, of course, an extension into the early age period of what obtains among adults. An example of its operation in the nation's capital follows:

Like any other socially ambitious newcomer, Mrs. Toy would like to move immediately into the embassy circle and pass from there into the more powerful Cabinet group. To accomplish these aims she must know the right people, and the right people are found, of course, only in the right places. Washington's most correct residential districts are Massachusetts Avenue, where most of the embassies are; Arlington across the bridge; or Georgetown, the one-time Negro colony whose old brick houses are now occupied by such celebrities as the Harry Hopkinses, the James B. Forrestals, the Francis Biddles, and Mrs. Edward B. McLean. The newcomer whose husband can afford it (and if he can't, she'd better stay home) can rent a small furnished house in Georgetown for about four hundred dollars a month.<sup>12</sup>

### *Status-Crossing Romances.*

The role of marriage as a status-achieving device has been emphasized recently in sociological literature.<sup>13</sup> Obviously, in this respect marriage is only one step in a process which begins before marriage and does not culminate with it. The whole range of romantic relations may be considered from the standpoint of their role in the status systems of society. This process begins with courtship. To become the favored one

<sup>12</sup> Margaret Case Harriman, "How to Woo Washington," *Harper's Magazine*, August, 1944, pp. 227-228. See also, Walter Firey, "Sentiment and Symbolism as Ecological Variables," *American Sociological Review*, April, 1945, pp. 140-149.

<sup>13</sup> James H. S. Bossard, "Marriage as a Status Achieving Device," *Sociology and Social Research*, September-October, 1944, pp. 3-10.

of a member of the opposite sex who belongs to a higher prestige group is an effective and frequently successful way of moving across a class line. The method of operation is somewhat as follows: The boy or girl of higher status intercedes with his or her crowd in behalf of the chosen one. Tolerance of the chosen one may follow. Subsequently, there are invitations from the higher status crowd. Such invitations create a special opportunity. If the neophyte measures up to requirements, group acceptance may follow, and the newly arrived one becomes a member of the clique, especially in the eyes of outside observers.

There are various specific aspects of such class-crossing romances. One consists of the cases where relationships are with or between minority groups. As in marriage, so in premarital romantic attachments there is often the opportunity for escape from an ascribed status. Another aspect involves premarital sex relationships. Studies of sex delinquency among girls reveal how frequently the girl of lower status seeks to "put herself across" with a higher-status boy on the basis of sex relationships. The relative status of the mothers and fathers of children born out of wedlock is an illustration in point. Similar in implication are Whyte's studies of Italian attitudes. He writes: "In the social and ethnic group category, the most desirable woman for non-marital sex relations is the girl of old American stock background, preferably blonde, who has a higher status than the corner-boy."<sup>14</sup>

#### RELATIVE EMPHASES IN STATUS SYSTEMS

One of the continuing problems in every society, of special significance for those in the lower age groups, is the proper relative emphasis upon the ascribed and the achieved statuses. The foregoing analysis should have made it clear that a great deal of the business of living is taken care of by the ascribed statuses, that the behavior involved in these roles is socially typed, and that the child can be trained for it. Clarity and definiteness in group expectancies, and habit in behavior patterns, seem necessary for survival and desirable for the development of stable personalities. The individual child does need a cultural ledge sufficiently broad and stable to permit satisfactory performance and adequate security.

On the other hand, too much limitation in the achieved status is a

<sup>14</sup> William F. Whyte, "A Slum Sex Code," *American Journal of Sociology*, July, 1943, p. 28.

curb on the ambitions and development of the child. A curb on the former makes for feelings of frustration; limitation of the latter entails a loss of social efficiency and leadership. In younger societies, and where conditions are changing constantly, this may prove particularly serious. As a society matures, and the adjustive relationships between groups and between the society and its physical environment come into being, such limitations may be considered of less importance.

#### SUMMARY

1. Status may be defined as relative social position. Thus conceived, it has its individual as well as its group and class aspects.

2. There are two main groups of statuses: the ascribed and the achieved.

3. The factors underlying the ascription of status include the color complex, ethnic origin, social class, sex, age, age relationship, order of birth, primogeniture, plural birth, adoption, illegitimacy, and membership in a kinship unit.

4. A large part of the ordinary business of living is included in the operation of the ascribed statuses. Their relative importance is greatest in small and relatively stable societies.

5. Every society includes a number of achieved statuses which are open to competitive achievement. Some of the status-achieving devices which are particularly significant in child and youth development are athletic skill, artistic achievement, educational attainment, group membership, place of residence, and class-crossing romances.

6. The proper relative emphasis upon the ascribed and achieved statuses is a continuing problem in every society. The essential requirement is balance, and this point seems to change with the development of the particular society.

## Part V:

### Some Problem Families



## Parents with Problem Attitudes



Thus far, the approach to the sociology of child development has been through the analysis of family situations, with reference to their significance for children. The effort has been to show how the family operates to mold the personality of the child, how the family inducts him into the prevailing culture, what differentials in this process occur from one class to another, and how behavior requirements and stimuli are typed at different status levels. Speaking generally, these discussions reflect the changes in child study from the earlier emphasis on problems of social misconduct and economic need to the contemporary stress on the processes of child rearing, and from a primary concern with socially disadvantaged children to concern with those at all cultural levels.

Some emphasis should be given, however, to the problem approach; and this chapter, together with the next two, will be devoted to family situations which have been identified as of the problem-creating kind. One group of these situations is caused by the attitudes of parents toward their children, and an analysis of these constitutes the major part of the present chapter. The following two chapters are devoted to homes with conflict situations and to families under stress, chiefly in the latter case because of the impact of external factors upon family life. Following the basic approach in this volume, it seems proper to think of these as problem homes with children, rather than of homes with problem children.

### THE RANGE OF FAMILY SITUATIONS

Before proceeding to a discussion of these selected groups of family problems, we should say something about the range of family situations. How extensive this range is can be gathered from the preceding

chapters, in which some of the chief aspects or dimensions of family life and of family-life relationships have been identified. If each such dimension is thought of as a straight line running from zero to 100, it will be evident that any given family may be at any point on this line. If, now, several of these so-called dimensions are combined, some idea of the individuality and variety of family situations will become apparent. The range of specific family situations is endless.

The study of family situations began with an analysis of the more conspicuous problem-creating cases. At first, these were considered chiefly from the standpoint of the good of the child, with emphasis upon broad moral factors. Gradually, however, other factors which could be easily detected as well as tested and measured, such as health, education, and economic status, were included. The procedure for studying the family developed into an examination of the situations of individuals with specific behavior irregularities, in order to find which of these measurable factors were most constant in the homes of these individuals.

Although many types of family situations in terms of these factors were identified, two discoveries led to the formation of a new approach. The first was the realization that selected unhealthy factors do not inevitably produce unhealthy home situations; the second was the development of newer insights into the processes and significance of personality formation, especially through family interaction. The result has been the emergence in recent years of an approach to the study of family situations as groups of interacting persons influenced by special sets of circumstances, to which the family reacts in specific ways.

The very number of these studies has led, still more recently, to attempts to systematize and classify family situations. These attempts have been reviewed by Boll,<sup>1</sup> who considers this movement in the social sciences in relation to similar developments in the other older sciences. Particularly helpful and suggestive are the classificatory schemes proposed by Weill<sup>2</sup> and Symonds.<sup>3</sup> Mrs. Boll's classification is reproduced in Table 4 as an inductive summary of the literature covering the years 1926 to 1940.

<sup>1</sup> James H. S. Bossard and Eleanor S. Boll, *Family Situations*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1943, chaps. 4-8.

<sup>2</sup> Blanche Weill, *Behavior of Young Children in the Same Family*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1928.

<sup>3</sup> Percival M. Symonds, *The Psychology of Parent-Child Relationships*, D. Appleton-Century Company, Inc., New York, 1939.

TABLE 4. A Classification of Family Situations<sup>4</sup>


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| <i>Intra-Family Relationships</i> |                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| I. Affectional relationships      |                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| A. Excess of affection            | 1. The possessive home<br>2. The oversolicitous home<br>3. The overindulgent home                                                                                                      |
| B. Normal affection               | 1. The companionable home                                                                                                                                                              |
| C. Discrimination in affection    | 1. The divided home<br>2. The favored-child home<br>3. The "impartial" home                                                                                                            |
| D. Inconsistency of affection     | 1. The bickering home<br>2. The unreliable home                                                                                                                                        |
| E. Displacement of affection      | 1. The home with a new member                                                                                                                                                          |
| F. Lack of affection              | 1. The nagging home<br>2. The frigid home<br>3. The neglectful home                                                                                                                    |
| G. Frank rejection                | 1. The home of the unwanted child                                                                                                                                                      |
| I. Subjectual relationships       |                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| A. Repression                     | 1. The mother-controlled home<br>2. The father-dominated home<br>3. The overly demanding home                                                                                          |
| B. Anarchy                        | 1. The child-dictated home                                                                                                                                                             |
| C. Confusion                      | 1. The home with too many bosses                                                                                                                                                       |
| D. Approaching balance            | 1. The democratic home                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <i>Family Patterns</i>            |                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| A. Size                           | 1. The large family<br>2. The one-child family                                                                                                                                         |
| B. Organization                   | 1. The cooperative family<br>2. The independent family<br>3. The incomplete family                                                                                                     |
| C. Activity                       | 1. The nomadic family<br>2. The "joiner" family<br>3. The family of the intelligentsia<br>4. The "cliff-dweller" family<br>5. The community-benefactor family                          |
| D. Values and goals               | 1. The social-climber family<br>2. The materialistic family<br>3. The overly religious family<br>4. The scientific family<br>5. The superstitious family<br>6. The conventional family |

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<sup>4</sup>Bossard and Boll, *op. cit.*, pp. 111-112.



TABLE 4 (Continued)

*External Factors*

- |                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| A. Socio-economic status | 1. The inadequately financed home<br>2. The suddenly wealthy home<br>3. The large-inheritance home<br>4. The mother-supported family<br>5. The family marked by peculiar occupational characteristics<br>6. The home of culture conflict<br>7. The disgraced home<br>8. The family in the public eye |
| B. Neighborhood          | 1. The farm family<br>2. The small-town family<br>3. The city family<br>4. The summer resort family<br>5. The misfit-in-the-neighborhood family<br>6. The family in a substandard neighborhood                                                                                                       |
| C. Health                | 1. The home of the invalid<br>2. The home of the defective                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |

## PARENTS WHO REJECT THEIR CHILDREN

Reference was made in Chapter III to the role of parental attitudes toward parenthood and children, and to the chief sources of these attitudes. From that discussion, it follows that many parents tend to reject their children, with obvious consequences for the development of the child. This is the first of the problems of family personnel to be considered in this chapter.

This type of problem home first came to the attention of students of social relations because of the resultant behavior of the children involved. After reviewing the literature on the subject, Symonds concluded that when either or both parents reject a child, he is likely to be characterized as aggressive, annoying in school, attention-getting, hostile, hyperactive, jealous, or rebellious; and that he may commit such delinquencies as truancy, thieving, or lying.<sup>5</sup> There is every evidence that such children are driven abnormally by two quests: one, to attract attention, i.e., to gain group acceptance; the other, to see their teachers and parents upset about them. Obviously, both of these are compensatory.<sup>6</sup>

More recently, the subject of child rejection has been emphasized in the literature on planned parenthood. Because of the lack of knowl-

<sup>5</sup> Symonds, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

<sup>6</sup> For an excellent study of parental acceptance and rejection, see *ibid.*, chap. 2.

edge, or the unavailability, of reliable contraceptives, it is pointed out that many unplanned pregnancies ensue, with the subsequent birth of children who are not wanted by their parents. The facts on abortion bear eloquent testimony to the urgent desperation of such parents.

The chief concern here is with the nature of the family situation in child rejection. This, we contend, needs considerably more careful analysis than has been given to it. Parental rejection of the child has been referred to generally as though it were relatively simple, effective from birth throughout the child's life, and involved similar attitudes for both parents. Obviously, this represents an oversimplification of the facts. While such situations do exist, they are only a minor part of a much larger situation. It may help, therefore, to conceive of rejection situations as having at least three dimensions. First, there is the number of persons in the family group who reject the child, for the attitudes of all are involved in the family situation. It may be the mother, father, sibling, grandparent, or whoever are members of the child's family of orientation, singly, or in any possible combination.

The Black family illustrates rejection by the father and acceptance by the mother.

Mr. and Mrs. Black were married when they were 26 and 22 years of age, respectively. They lived in a three-room apartment in a large city. Mr. Black earned a relatively high salary. Mrs. Black stayed at home and kept house. Their relations, including their sex life, were mutually satisfactory. But Mrs. Black became lonely after a time, and "tricked" her husband, as she put it, into parenthood. From the beginning of her pregnancy, he was not interested in the coming of the child, apparently indicating a resentment against it for breaking into a happy, carefree relationship with his wife. After the child was born, he lost interest in her, and finally, when the child was seven months old, deserted. Some time afterwards, he began living with another woman. For a time, he made occasional payments in support of his wife and child. Mrs. Black seems devoted to her child, and does an excellent job of mothering it. Recently, after her divorce, she has remarried. There have been no children with the second husband, who seems somewhat lukewarm towards his stepchild.

During the war period, many children were reared in the homes of their grandparents. The case of the Carstairs illustrates what may happen.

Helen Carstairs married an army lieutenant before Pearl Harbor. By the time she discovered she was pregnant, her husband was out of the country. She lived with her parents when her child was born. The parents

were not happy over the marriage of their daughter, they did not consider the son-in-law worthy of the daughter, and were secretly rather displeased over the coming of the new grandchild. There is an apparent difference in their attitude toward this one and their other grandchildren. Mrs. Carstairs is already conscious of this difference, sensing the elements of rejection in their attitude. She seems to be unusually solicitous about her son's welfare, as if to compensate for the grandparents.

A child may be rejected by the other siblings in the family. This sometimes happens in the case of a child born late in life, after the other children in the family are full grown or nearly so.

John Lott was born when his mother was 44 years old. His parents had four other children, ranging from 17 to 24 years. The Lotts live in a small town, and there has been a good deal of bantering comment about the late arrival. The other children have had to take a lot of teasing about the new brother. The attitude of the parents is tinged with feelings of shame, and three of the four siblings look upon the newcomer with mingled feelings in which there are ridicule and feelings of rejection. Only one of the siblings is receptive, markedly so, which appears in striking contrast to the attitudes of the others. John early displayed marked signs of aggressive behavior, as though he would compel you to notice him, whether you would or no.

The most obvious cases of families division in regard to acceptance of a child appear in remarriages when one or both mates have children. Remarriage occurs with considerable frequency. A tabulation of 507,427 marriages consummated in New York State during eleven selected years shows that approximately one out of five (18.5 per cent) were remarriages for one or both partners, and one out of sixteen (6.2 per cent) were remarriages for both.<sup>7</sup> Smith<sup>8</sup> has recently summarized the literature on the stepchild, and much of the material available can be viewed from the standpoint of child acceptance and rejection. In addition to remarriage there is the informal shifting of mates, so prevalent in the lower classes. Here, too, the problem of rejection looms large, with added implications for the child because of his knowledge of the extramarital relationship. The reconstruction of a home, whether through remarriage of the parent or not, often means that the child is "bounced here and there like a ball" and does not know to whom he can go or where he belongs.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> James H. S. Bossard, *Marriage and the Child*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1940, p. 130.

<sup>8</sup> Smith, William C., "The Stepchild," *American Sociological Review*, April, 1945, pp. 237-242.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 241.

In summary, the basic fact in regard to this first so-called dimension is that family attitudes toward a child involve the attitude of all the members of the family of orientation. While the mother's acceptance-rejection response is in many ways of primary importance, the response of the other members is also significant, both in its meaning for the child and also in the effect which rejection by one member has upon the other members.

A second dimension of rejection situations involves their time aspect. The rejection of a child may be permanent or temporary. Here, as elsewhere, there is the possibility of an honest change of attitude. This seems to be illustrated in the following case:

Mrs. King did not want to have a child. This attitude may have been created largely by her mother, who repeatedly had expressed the hope that her daughter would not "have to have a child." When Mrs. King became pregnant, she was both frightened and resentful, and her mother continued to express her hope that "something" might happen. However, the child was born after a rather difficult delivery. After the birth, Mrs. King gave clear evidence of her rejection of her child, and turned rather frigid toward her husband. About two years later, while taking her child to a public park one day, she met two other young mothers, both of whom were quite proud of their motherhood. The three speedily became quite friendly, and gradually Mrs. King began to absorb the attitude of her two friends. Gradually, she seems to have relaxed and her attitude toward her husband changed. Meanwhile, her child was developing into a very attractive young person. At this time, Mrs. King had a prolonged illness, and during her convalescence she did some serious thinking. Something in the nature of a complete change toward life seems to have occurred. She freed herself from her mother's influence. A year and a half later, she had a second, and planned, child. She says that the coming of these two children, and especially the first, were the turning point in her life.

A third dimension of rejection situations concerns the form or nature which the rejection takes. This is in part a matter of degree, but is much more a form of expression. For example, rejection may be physical, involving the child himself, as in the case of abandoned children. Ordinarily, physical rejection occurs with illegitimate children and may take the form of abandoning the child on a doorstep or a dump pile or along a country road; or it may involve surrendering him to an agency or relative or adopting family. In some instances, however, married couples turn their child over at birth or soon afterward to a relative or some other person "to raise." Rejection later in the child's life may involve placement in an institution, reform school,

boarding school, convent, or military school. Again, it may express itself chiefly in economic ways, in a failure to provide adequately—lack of toys, inadequate clothing, no personal allowance, and the like. The mink-coated mother and the daughter in the frayed dress tell their own story. In other cases, the rejection is of an educational nature, chiefly omission. There is a lack of guidance, supervision, or educational facilities. The parents have other interests, and delegate the training of their children to servants, nurses, or relatives. Finally, rejection may be emotional in character; this is by far the most emphasized form in recent years. Contemporary students seem to think that emotional rejection of the child has more serious consequences than any other parental fault.<sup>10</sup> What it means above all else is that the child's basic craving for intimate response, his desire to be loved, is not satisfied. It is this that hurts most, and gives meaning to other forms of rejection. In other words, there is a spiritual inadequacy in such homes, and the child's payment for it is a basic lack of security.

There are reasons why this emotional rejection is particularly serious today. One is the predominance of the immediate form of family; a second, the small-family system. Combined, these two mean, as was pointed out in Chapter III, that the child views the world from a very narrow psychosocial ledge, as it were, and when this narrow ledge is uncertain or unfriendly, the result can only be great insecurity. Along with these factors in the marked vertical mobility of many families. This was particularly operative during and immediately after the war years. Millions of families have been away from their kinsfolk, and not integrated in the life of the new community. The children in these families naturally have felt isolated, often pathetically so. When, in addition, they feel rejected by their own parents, the result can only be marked feelings of loneliness and insecurity, and a starving for affection and attention. In this emotional dilemma, some children turn to their teachers or the opposite sex, or identify themselves with some mass explosive movement like that of the Sinatra bobby-socksers.

A final word should be said about parents who reject their children. Not all are heartless and selfish, as is often assumed. Many young people who become parents and reject their children are themselves the victims of maladjustment;<sup>11</sup> hence they are only the transmitters

<sup>10</sup> For an excellent example, see Jessie Taft, "The Effect of an Unsatisfactory Mother-Daughter Relationship upon the Development of a Personality," *The Family*, March, 1926, pp. 10-17.

<sup>11</sup> Symonds, *op. cit.*, pp. 94 ff.

of what was done to them. Some of these parents may appreciate their own inaptitudes, so their fundamental unwillingness to be parents represents a reasoned judgment rather than a selfish whim. Again, some young people are high-pressured into being parents, and their resentment against this pressure may find expression in their attitudes toward their children. Such pressure may be exerted within the circle of kinsfolk, as in the case of upper-class families which put marked emphasis upon family continuity. Or it may be community pressure, such as one finds in small towns, where persons are paired off, married, and become parents, under the innuendoes and suggestions of their friends. Again, a parent's rejection of a particular child may grow out of that child's relation to the sex balance within the family. A couple with four girls may be none too pleased when the fifth child is a girl. Five boys and a husband may give a wife strong feelings of resentment against a sixth son. Finally, rejection of a child may symbolize the parents' deep-seated rejection of the world. To many thoughtful people, the world today is not a happy or pleasing prospect to give the bearer of a new life. To reject a child may only express resentment at one's cosmic destiny. Perhaps all that has been said suggests that parental rejection of a child is not a simple factor, operating alone, but is a phase of a larger pattern of attitudes and values. Parents who reject their children need understanding, too. Moreover, parental rejection is often partial, and is modified by misgivings of various kinds. This is a highly significant fact, for it means that the rejection of a child leads to feelings of guilt which express themselves in a marked solicitousness concerning the child. Such a combination results in a family situation which combines the evils of rejection and of oversolicitousness. It is to the latter type of situation that we turn next.

#### PARENTS WHO MAGNIFY THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES

A second group of problem parents stands in direct contrast to those who reject their children. In part, these parents reveal a tendency to overaccept their children, but the group envisaged here involves a somewhat broader and perhaps more significant concept. In going through the literature on child behavior problems, one finds a number of family situations in which the common element is the tendency on the part of parents to magnify their parental responsibilities in one or more ways. As a group, these parents take themselves too seriously. Obviously, this is again a matter of degree, with a cultural determination

of the point at which it is considered a problem. The concrete expressions of such situations, as well as their particular emphases, come to attention in a variety of ways, the more important and common of which will be identified briefly.

1. First are the parents who overprotect their children.<sup>12</sup> This may be the father, mother, grandparent, sibling, or other family member, singly or in combination. The mother, however, is the most common offender, and it is usually a son whom she overprotects. When a father overprotects, a daughter is most often the object. Overprotection, in its milder forms, is quite prevalent. Frequently, too, it is temporary, ceasing with the birth of another child or with the advancing maturity of the parents. Probably the most serious type, and certainly the most frequent clinical type, is maternal overprotection which masks or is compensatory for a strong rejection of a child.

Maternal overprotection, which is synonymous with the mother's excessive care of her children, manifests itself usually in three ways. First, there is excessive contact—"the mother is always there." This involves continuous companionship between mother and child, prolonged nursing care, excessive fondling, and sleeping with the mother long past infancy. Second is infantilization, which means prolonging infancy by rendering services to the child far beyond the customary age. Illustrative of such services are breast feeding, bathing, feeding, punishing, and the like. In short, what these cases involve is an undue prolongation of the "waiting-on" period. Third is the prevention of social maturity—"she won't let him grow up." Here one finds an active prevention of the child's growth in the direction of self-reliance. Within the home, there is no emphasis upon family chores, self-care, or the care of rooms or personal possessions; outside the home, there is prevention of experiences which make for growth in social adaptation, which lead to meeting one's own problems and fighting one's own way.

Two specific problems, frequently encountered, may be noted here. One relates to the child's school experience. The overprotecting mother coaches the child, may prepare his lessons, makes frequent visits to the school, conflicts with the teacher, and at times becomes an interfering

<sup>12</sup> In the voluminous literature on this type of parent, Levy's analysis is a model of insight and clarity of presentation, and his findings are heavily drawn upon in the next few paragraphs. Cf. David M. Levy, *Maternal Overprotection*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1943.

nuisance. In the more extreme forms, she tries to set the child against the teacher. It is as though she resented the school and the teacher, seeing in them a threat to her monopolistic control of her child. The second problem results from the child's formation of friendships. Here again, the overprotecting mother tends to reach out as if to combat the process, or at least to direct and control it to her child's advantage. Many parents apparently seek to narrow the social contacts of their children.

2. A distinct form of overprotection is often found among the parents of children who present health or physical disability problems. That such children should evoke more parental care and concern than healthy ones warrants no explanation in terms of neuroses. Levy does not think that illnesses per se are productive of maternal overprotection, but he concludes that they may intensify a tendency to overprotect that is already present; i.e., illness gives an added push to an attitude present before the appearance of the illness. Also, one should recognize the difference between serious illnesses and others, between illnesses which require prolonged nursing and those which do not. Moreover, certain mothers may have been "sensitized" by experience with other very serious illnesses.

In the case of deformed or defective children parental attitudes and behavior seem much more pronounced. "In the mental and emotional attitudes of parents toward the physically defective child in the family," writes Laura Hood, "there were characteristics so constant that they might fairly be considered as representing a 'psychology of parents of a crippled child.' To have a little child paralyzed or otherwise physically defective is an experience probably more devastating to mind and spirit than to suffer grave physical impairment one's self, and the psychological adjustments required may be more complex."<sup>18</sup>

In many of these cases, parents are filled with a sense of hopelessness that finds expression in an emotional pattern based on pity. When these disabilities occur in families which have no conception of the possibilities of modern orthopedic work, these patterns take a permanent form. Often, too, the parental reactions are complicated by feelings of guilt over an imagined responsibility or proof of a family taint. From this complex of circumstances there result family situations which not only impair the possibilities for any constructive program dealing with the

<sup>18</sup> Laura Hood, "On Interviewing Parents of Crippled Children," *Social Service Review*, March, 1928, pp. 62-63.



child's condition or defect, but also create serious difficulties for his personal and social development.

3. Some parents magnify their responsibilities because of their own life experiences. These are persons who may have gained some degree of success in life, but at considerable cost. They have come through, but in the hard way. Their experiences have been such as to leave psychic scars which, even though they have healed, are always visible by way of reminder. Such parents develop at times an almost neurotic susceptibility to human competition. Some of them tend to withdraw from it to lead an isolated life; others seek to project such a pattern upon their children. They seek to insulate their children against the raw edges of life, as it were. "I never want my child to go through what I did."

A special aspect of this problem is found often among individuals who become parents late in life. Social workers who are concerned with the selection of homes for child placement know the problems which overage parents present. Coupled with the financial ability of such parents is frequently the tendency to overprotect the children in their care.

4. Akin to overprotecting parents are those who interfere too much with the lives of their growing children. They want always to know what the children are doing, where they are going, with whom, who said what and to whom. Here is a form of parental aggressiveness which may take many forms and stem from various roots. There may be elements of jealousy and resentment, a desire to put the children on the defensive for stepping outside the range of family activities. It may derive from an overly active imagination or glandular system. At times it may be the expression of a personality trait, a tendency to take oneself too seriously. Such parents extend the range of their concern over too wide an area of their children's lives. This frequently leads to parent-child conflicts during adolescence, for it is then that the child's own area of operation broadens, and the tendency to exclude adults from this area begins to manifest itself. Most students of behavior problems in children have regarded this as the effort of parents to extend the period of infantile dependence; the emphasis here is on a somewhat different situation, in which parents face the growing-up process of their children but insist on sharing their experience, actually or vicariously, while doing so.

5. Finally, there are the parents who work too hard at the craft of

parenthood. Looming large among these are those who are always reading books or attending lectures on "child psychology," are always rejoicing in the "latest theory" of "psychoanalysis," and applying it to their own children. The particular "theory" seldom remains the same over any considerable period of time; but while it is in favor, its acceptance is exclusive and complete. It is to be understood, of course, that there is intended here no reference to the efforts of serious-minded parents who seek to equip themselves for obligations whose importance they recognize. Rather the problem involves a sort of dilettantism, or pseudo-scientific faddism, which reminds one at best of the truth of the statement, "A little learning is a dangerous thing."

*Some Sources of Tendencies to Magnify Parental Responsibilities.*

In addition to the foregoing suggestions, some of the factors which may lead parents to magnify their responsibilities will be noted briefly. First are the parents who have a child after a long period of sterility or a series of miscarriages or stillbirths. There may be the continuing fear that no other pregnancy will ensue. Naturally, such circumstances tend to give a heightened evaluation of the child, and may be coupled with unduly apprehensive and protective reactions. Similar is the case where there has been a difficult confinement, with the fear or expectation that it will be the last one. Second is the emphasis upon compensatory pressures. Hostile feelings toward pregnancy are common in our culture; and from one point of view, as Levy suggests, maternal overprotection can be regarded as compensatory to unconscious hostility. Third are unhappy marriages, particularly for the women. Just as a wife devoted to her husband cannot be exclusively a mother, so the child bears the brunt of his mother's unsatisfied or unsatisfactory love life. The sexually frustrated mother naturally drains off the libido energy by oversolicitude for her child. Something should be said in this connection about, fourth, the thwarted ambitions of parents. As pointed out in an earlier chapter, the child gives the parent an opportunity to relive his life, with the result that thwarted parental ambitions are projected upon the child. This is often spoken of as the desire of parents to give their children what they themselves were denied. In many cases, this takes the normal form of having strong ambitions for the child, but in others, it develops to a pathological degree which creates problems for the child.

In addition to the foregoing, there are three other factors in com-

temporary society which suggest that the parents who magnify their responsibility are on the increase. One is the increasing prevalence of the small-family system which, coupled with early marriage, means that the period of childbearing is over relatively early in the life of the mother. Another factor is the increased longevity of the mother, together with the general rise in standards of positive health and vitality in the middle and older age brackets. At the same time, the separation of home and occupation means that the husband is away from home the greater part of the day. In combination, this means that for many present-day mothers the period of childbearing, and even of child rearing, is over while life is still at the flood tide for them. Confronted with this situation, an increasing number of mothers are finding an outlet in employment or in public service careers. There are those, however, who can find no form of satisfactory adjustment save in an intensification of their parental duties. It is here that danger lurks for the child.

#### *Basic Aspects of Families Who Magnify Their Responsibilities.*

A final word should be said concerning the basic aspects of the group of families under discussion. Three such aspects stand out clearly, both from a descriptive analysis of family situations in general and from the literature on behavior problems as it deals with the products of such situations. The first of these is a life situation or configuration which is weighted unduly in the child's favor. To put it another way, there is a lack of balance in the pattern of personal relationships. The child receives more than a properly proportionate share of attention, affection, and service. The cards of personal relationships are stacked in his favor. When early developed and long continued, this results in the creation of the egocentric psychopath who wants to be the beloved tyrant in every situation.<sup>14</sup> When this feeling is of lesser degree or shorter duration, there appears the demanding type of person who expects and anticipates all kinds of special attentions and services, or the aggressive, bullying, resentful type who seeks to compel special consideration. A second basic aspect is the interference with the growing-up process. The child is not allowed to develop responsibility, to stand on his own feet, and above all, to experiment with life. Growing up to be an adult is a hard, long, slow process, which is best done the hard

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Levy, *op. cit.*, chap. 8. Consult also, Alfred Adler, *The Pattern of Life*, Cosmopolitan Book Co., New York, 1930.

way. Hence when parents magnify their responsibilities, they either do the experimenting themselves or interfere with the child's learning-from-experience process by interposing themselves into it. The incidental but serious effect for the child is the maintenance of infantile or subage responses. A third and quite obvious aspect is the impediments placed in the child's relations with his friends. The children in the group of families under consideration reveal a general difficulty in making friends, for the obvious reasons that their parents keep them away from the necessary experimental contacts, or interfere in the process, or have built up in them a dependence on their parents and other adults which precludes friendships with their own age group.

#### PARENTS WHO DISREGARD THE PERSONALITIES OF THEIR CHILDREN

A third main group of problem parents are those who tend to disregard the personalities of their children. These are the parents who cannot see their children as separate and distinct personalities but at best see them as vest-pocket editions of themselves. As conceived here, this group involves in part the dominance-submission dimension emphasized in the child behavior literature of the past generation, but our attempt is to present a broader and possibly a more fundamental concept. To look at parent-child relations from the dominance-submission point of view is to see them through adult eyes; to speak of a disregard of personalities is to think in terms of child development. Perhaps the broader aspects of this concept will become clear from an examination of some of the family situations and parental types involved.

First are the families dominated by acquisitive-minded parents who have a strong sense of the "mine and thine" aspects of life. For them, objects and people fall into two groups: those that belong to them and those that do not. The latter are rather strictly objured; they do not register except incidentally in the orbit of their attention. But the things which belong to them are completely and wholly theirs. It is *my* car, *my* house, *my* wife, *my* child. Life is a series of possessive relationships, of which they are the center, from which it follows that the relationships are to be shaped in accordance with this fact.

There are two interpretative approaches to such parents. First, they may be driven by an unconscious need to "possess" and manage someone in order to gain assurance of their own importance; there has been a good deal of emphasis upon this kind of explanation. Somewhat less has been said about the successful parent who has a rather conscious

assurance of his own abilities and who discharges his parental duties with the same aggressive vigor that distinguishes him in his occupational relationships. Consider, for example, a certain type of successful executive. His breakfast is served at his order. Then he confers with his gardener and gives instructions for the tasks of the day. A chauffeur drives him to his office, where a touch of a button summons people all day long. Today he "handles" a dozen difficult situations involving many persons, and does so exceedingly well. Returning home, a problem concerning his child is presented to him. He acts promptly, feeling very confident of his judgment, his insight into life, and his knowledge of life's values. There is not only his confidence, but also his assumption of the dominant role in every situation. There are those persons who carry as their sole responsibility the complete range of life, and who think of everything—perpetual masters of ceremonies. Obviously, here one is confronted with a character complex rather than a neurotic pattern. Such individuals manage their children because they are the type of people who always manage.

Second are the family situations dominated by parents who have strong ideas, convictions, or philosophies. They may be successful executives who generalize their experience, they may be academic introverts who have arrived at a theory, they may be "crackpots" who have absorbed some singular notion; their common condition is their exclusive devotion to an idea. Such ideas may be of any type. Two types are of particular significance here: those which relate to child rearing, and those which relate to careers.

The field of child rearing is the peculiarly happy hunting ground for faddists with their momentary theories of human development. "What children need is—" is their positive cry, although their agreement ends with this unfinished sentence. One such theory and what it means in a child's life may be ascertained from the following case:

Frank Pierce is vice-president of a bank. He has risen to his present position from the ranks. He is devoted to his job, his church, and his family. For some time now, he has been friendly with a colonel in the infantry during World War II. What children need, he and the colonel keep on telling each other, is discipline—strict, severe, rigorous. Children should be taught to obey, promptly and completely. The way the father applies this theory is illustrated by the following incident. His three-year-old child is engrossed in play on the floor. The father watches for the moment when he is completely absorbed in his play, to say: "Junior, get daddy a drink of water." For failure to obey at once, Junior is punished.

The second type of fixed ideas which prevail among parents concerns the careers of children. These are the parents who, from the day the children are born or from early infancy, have "plans" for them. They are to go to this school, college, and professional school; they are to engage in this particular sport or acquire that selected skill; they are to go into a certain occupation or make a certain kind of marriage. Such positive ideas or plans spring from various sources. At the upper-class levels, where the incidence of such situations is high, they often derive from family pride and a wish for the continuance of traditional performance at the family level. The longer such traditions have prevailed, the greater the pressure upon the child may be. At times it is not only the pressure of the living members of the family; the influence of the deceased members still remains. At slightly lower social levels, the parents may be social climbers who bear down upon their children to complete an unfinished program of class ascent. At the lowest class levels it is perhaps more often in regard to the selection of an occupation that an ambitious parent, perhaps the mother, seeks to exert undue influence. Throughout this entire range of situations, the unfulfilled wishes of the parents come to be projected in many cases upon the children; i.e., the parents seek to relive their lives in those of their children.

A third variety of family situation in which the children's personalities tend to be disregarded are those in which the children are utilized to satisfy the emotional needs of the parents or other adults in the family. This includes the well-known "silver cord" cases, where a parent, most often the mother, binds the children to her to satisfy a thwarted emotion. Strecker has discussed these situations in relation to the problems of military service. Silver cords, he writes, come in varying lengths. Sometimes they are very short, but much more often they are very long, often extremely long. Seldom is a silver cord an obviously binding tie. It appears in many guises. There is the oversolicitous mother whose gentle, sacrificing manner hides a dominance that is hard and arbitrary; and the frail, weak little mother who, after giving her health and strength to "the children," wants at least one to find happiness in never leaving her side; and the artificially "happy" home where everyone loves each other too much to quarrel.<sup>15</sup> In addition, there is the mother who is so unhappy that only the devotion of her children

<sup>15</sup> Strecker, Edward A., "Psychiatry Speaks to Democracy," *Mental Hygiene*, October, 1945, pp. 591-605.

"keeps her going"; the unmarried aunt who "devotes herself" to a niece or nephew; and the father who, denied recognition in his adult world, emphasizes over and again the respect and obedience that are a father's due. Parental disregard of the personalities of children may take the form of stark dominance, harsh and cold and exacting against the canvas of family life; but much more often it is a soft and loving tyranny, the satisfaction of parental demands as a debit due for services rendered. The variety of family situations under discussion here are chiefly of this kind.

Finally, there are the parents of today who are still steeped in the authoritarian lore of the past. Here we find not a pose, or an occupational habit, or of necessity a disguised emotional need, but a traditional conviction. Children must obey; it is the responsibility of the parents to compel it. "You do this because I say so. I am your father." This, it is well to remember, was the prevailing principle of child rearing in the family of past centuries. The dominating authoritarian father was only part of a larger pattern of family life which included the exercise of paternal authority over all the members, rigorous discipline, and the subordination of the individual to the family group, all to the end of family solidarity. Such powers on the part of the father were recognized in the law and hallowed by the church.

The carry-over of authoritarian-minded parents into today is found chiefly in two groups. The first is the first-generation Americans who have brought to this country the heritage of their past. These are chiefly European immigrants, often with a rural background, who believe in the patterns of the past and cannot adjust to new ideas and methods of parenthood. Second are the native American families who still cling to the ideas of the past. These are congregated chiefly in certain rural areas where changes in such ideas have occurred much more slowly than in our urban centers.

When these families move to the city, as has happened in millions of cases in recent decades, and come into contact with new forms of parent-child relationships, several reactions occur. Often the parents become confused, and in their confusion grow weak and inefficient between severe authoritarian outbursts. In other cases, they become aroused, stubborn, and, at times, even more confirmed in their convictions. In either event, the very contrast between their behavior and the prevailing pattern makes their procedure all the more startling, and

the problem for the children all the more serious. It is only another of the social costs of the mobility of the population.

#### SUMMARY

1. The range in family situations is extensive. There are a number of dimensions by which these situations may be measured, and any particular family may be placed at any point in the line of each dimension.

2. The accumulation of analyses of differing family situations has led to attempts to classify such situations. These classificatory schemes have become constantly more comprehensive. The Bossard-Boll classification is presented by way of example.

3. Among the problem family situations, three types are discussed. The first includes the parents who reject their children. Rejection situations are very complex. The rejecting person may be any member of the family group, and the attitude is subject to change at any time, often extremely so. Rejection may be physical, economic, or emotional in character. The latter type is particularly emphasized today.

4. A second type includes parents who magnify their responsibilities. This may take the form of overprotecting the child, usually on the part of the mother. Overprotection takes a distinct form in the case of children with health or disability problems. Parents take their parental duties too seriously, sometimes because of their own bitter experiences and sometimes because they have too aggressive an interest in their children's affairs.

5. The third main type includes parents who disregard the personalities of their children. These may be acquisitive-minded parents, with an overly developed sense of possession; they may be parents with very strong ideas, convictions, or philosophies which involve child development; the parents may have strong emotional needs, to satisfy which the children are exploited; and, finally, there is the authoritarian-minded parent who still insists upon being the master of his family.



## Homes with Conflict Situations

The family is a miniature society, it has been pointed out, that is unique for the continuing intimacy and the naked incisiveness of the interrelations between its members. From this it follows that one of the most important groups of family problems has to do with the harmonious adjustment of these interrelations. These problems, in turn, may be considered from the point of view of husband-wife relationships, or of their bearing upon the processes of child development. This chapter is devoted to homes with conflict situations, with particular reference to child development. Three separate groups of such situations are selected because of their importance for children: first, excessive quarreling between members of the family; second, culture conflicts between the parents; and, third, homes which become disorganized to the point where their unity is gone. Intergeneration conflicts are reserved for a subsequent chapter.

## PARENTS WHO OVARREL

### Relative Neglect in Child Study.

The literature on family problems gives due emphasis to the problems of personality adjustment within the family and to the fact that, as marriage becomes more and more a romantic, personal affair rather than a socially controlled institution, these problems grow increasingly important. Most of this emphasis, however, is devoted to the relationship between the marital partners. Family discord and conflicts are thus considered as a form of interaction between the adults in the family, with reference chiefly to the durability of the marriage and the personality development of the conflicting parties, and only incidental mention of any significance for child development.

Summary reports of cases brought to behavior clinics show remarkably little mention of children from homes with quarreling parents.

This is, perhaps, another evidence of the selective nature of clinic cases, resulting chiefly from the fact that it is parents and not children who decide upon clinic contacts. Obviously, quarreling parents do not bring their children nearly so often as overprotective parents or those who show feelings of guilt over rejecting their child.

Similarly sparse are the references to quarreling homes in juvenile delinquency studies. A notable exception is to be found in Healy and Bronner's summary of 4000 cases, presented over twenty years ago. "Excessive quarreling in the home," they wrote, "is one of the conditions that has been cited both by delinquents and relatives as making directly for bad conduct. We have come to know that in 12 per cent of our total 4000 cases there was excessive quarreling at home. Without any means of gauging in what percentage of families among our general population good temper gives way to quarreling in excess, we nevertheless feel that the proportion in our group must be unduly large."<sup>1</sup> Ten years later, Healy emphasized that in many cases of delinquency only the more superficial factors are stressed, that among the deeper causes are the emotional experiences of the delinquents, and that one of the most common of these is intense feelings of discomfort about family disharmony.<sup>2</sup>

### *Quarreling an Interactive Process.*

Conflict is a process, and quarreling is a form of conflict. Quarreling must be studied, therefore, as an interaction concept, which means, as Folsom points out, that we are concerned not with the behavior of the individuals who quarrel but with their interrelations. Their behavior may take any given form, and may differ from one person to another. The essential fact is that each person directly and intentionally opposes the other.<sup>3</sup> Thus conceived, quarreling must be recognized as a normal process in family life. Students of the family no longer think of the happy family as one in which there is no discord. Conflict within limitations is a process whereby problems are faced and frequently resolved. As with so many other things, it is the degree or extent of the process that is pathological.

<sup>1</sup> William Healy and Augusta F. Bronner, *Delinquents and Criminals: Their Making and Unmaking*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1926, p. 126.

<sup>2</sup> William Healy and Augusta F. Bronner, *New Light on Delinquency and Its Treatment*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1936, chaps. 6, 14.

<sup>3</sup> Joseph K. Folsom, *The Family and Democratic Society*, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, 1943, p. 42.

This conception of quarreling is inherent in the interesting distinction between destructive and productive quarreling made by Duvall and Hill.<sup>4</sup> Destructive quarrels are those which concentrate on the ego of the other, tending to destroy the illusions and fictions by which people live. Productive quarrels, on the other hand, are concerned with issues and problems; they involve redefinitions of situations; they relax the strain of emotional intimacies of the honeymoon period of marriage; and they often reveal the underlying strength of relationships between quarreling family members. Jersild develops somewhat the same concept of children's fights and quarrels.<sup>5</sup>

Insight into the nature and processes of marital discord can be found in the works of Burgess, Folsom, Groves, the Mowrers, and others. Two terms, conflict and tension, have customarily been used in their discussions, each with its own distinctive meaning. Burgess and Locke have written recently of the difference between them. Conflicts are fights which arise in families over all possible kinds of differences, but which tend to be solved or to terminate; tensions may be defined as unsolved conflicts which may find open expression or be repressed, with accumulating emotional force.<sup>6</sup> Both of these terms represent social realities; the latter seems particularly pertinent in the analysis of marital relations, and the former conforms to the pattern of thought presented in this chapter.

As a process of interaction, family conflicts may be *acute* or *chronic*. Acute conflict is characterized by a sudden outbreak, often taking a violent form and, when it results in a settlement, leaving no emotional scar. In chronic conflict, the conflict becomes constant, often at a certain level. Families in chronic conflict are in what the poet calls a "constant state of warfaring condition." Folsom speaks of *habituated* conflict as a form of conflict which reaches a certain level and continues there indefinitely. He also uses the term *progressive* conflict for conflict that "grows worse and worse."<sup>7</sup>

Quarreling as a process may be considered also in terms of the pre-

<sup>4</sup> Evelyn M. Duvall and Reuben Hill, *When You Marry*, D. C. Heath & Company, Boston, 1945, pp. 188-190.

<sup>5</sup> Arthur T. Jersild, *Child Psychology*, Prentice-Hall, Inc., New York, rev. ed., 1942, pp. 175 ff.

<sup>6</sup> Ernest W. Burgess and Harvey J. Locke, *The Family*, American Book Company, New York, 1945, p. 560.

<sup>7</sup> Ernest Groves and William Ogburn, *American Marriage and Family Relationships*, Henry Holt & Company, Inc., New York, 1928, chap. 6; Folsom, *op. cit.*, pp. 445-446.

precipitating agents or circumstances. It may result from the presence in the family of a disorganized personality who cannot meet the trivial annoyances of the day, or the faultfinding of a shrew who distills her chief joy in life from continually reminding her husband and children of some neglect of duty. It may be the work of a crass nagger, or of an ego that makes extremely stringent demands upon other members of the household. At times it is a daughter who reacts with automatic negativism to every effort to help her, or an adolescent who is trying to make her family over. Similar in kind is the wife who pinpricks her husband incessantly about minor points of etiquette so that she need not feel ashamed of him in their "crowd." Not infrequently older brothers and sisters, who ought to be leaving home to establish their own families, stay and raise the family pot to the boiling point. Much of the significance of family quarrels for children stems from the nature of those who precipitate and stage the quarrels.

### *Family Quarreling and the Child.*

From the standpoint of the child, there are at least five aspects of family quarreling which merit special consideration. First is the scope of the quarrel. How many members of the family are involved? Is it one parent indulging in his daily habit? Do both parents actively participate? Are the children drawn into the quarrels, and to what extent? Are other adult members of the family involved? How large is the family, and how many of its members are engaged, and to what extent? Second is the stage setting of the quarrel. Do the parents quarrel in "the secrecy of their boudoir," or is the scene staged at the dinner table? Many families do their quarreling at mealtime, with the result, in addition to other consequences, that nutrition and the digestive process are interfered with. Studies of the effects of fear, anger, and other emotional states upon the chemistry of the body are highly pertinent here. Another important fact about the staging of family quarrels is the extent to which the neighbors can hear them. This is particularly pertinent in the thin-walled houses and apartments in congested areas, for it means that the child's sense of shame is involved, and shame is a social factor as significant as it has been ignored in the literature of behavior. Third, there is the nature of the quarreling. The various forms of quarreling remain to be explored. They include half-irritated wrangling; a series of venomous, sharp-tongued exchanges; an icy repartee; a succession of sly thrusts, the fury of high anger; a crescendo

of threats; and, finally, the climax of physical violence. Perhaps the basic dimension of parental quarreling, as far as its meaning for children is concerned, is its emotion-provoking character. A fourth significant aspect of family quarrels is the extent to which they consume the attention, time, and energy of the parents. The child-rearing process is highly exacting, and the essential problem of many children grows out of the fact that the best efforts and energy of their parents go into fighting with each other, leaving only the husks of a spent passion for the children. Akin to this are the cases in which the emotion aroused in the quarreling parent is projected upon the child. Taking one's spite out on the children is very common, as is the habit of many parents of showing their disdain for each other by neglecting or being cruel to their children. It is quite clear that many cases of cruel treatment of children by their parents are only distorted expressions of hatred between the parents. The mother who has been beaten by her husband *can* in turn beat her child who is the image of the offending father. On the milder side, quarreling parents lose the sense of calmness, judgment, and insight necessary for normal and helpful relations with children. They are too occupied with their own emotions and problems to be of help to the children with theirs. Finally, there is the child's evaluation of parental quarrels. There may be a vague, uncritical acceptance of it all as the way of life. Santayana speaks of this in his own case in these words:

After they [my mother and sisters] left, my uncle Santiago, with his wife Maria Josefa and his daughter Antonita, came to live with us, and a new and distinct chapter begins in my experience. The scene, the persons, the events are still present with me most vividly. I didn't feel deeply or understand what was going on, but somehow the force of it impressed my young mind and established there a sort of criterion or standard of reality. That crowded, strained, disunited, and tragic family life remains for me the type of what life really is: something confused, hideous and useless. I do not hate it or rebel against it, as people do who think they have been wronged. It caused me no suffering: I was a child carried along as in a baby-carriage through the crowd of strangers: I was neither much bothered nor seriously neglected: and my eyes and ears became accustomed to the unvarnished truth of the world, neither selected for my instruction nor hidden from me for my benefit.<sup>8</sup>

Similar to this is the child's acceptance of quarreling as a habitual form of interaction. Quarreling parents make quarreling children who grow

<sup>8</sup> George Santayana, *Persons and Places*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1944, p. 119.

up to be quarreling mates—this is but a restatement of some of the findings on adjustment in marriage.<sup>9</sup> Other children lose respect for their quarreling parents, or confidence in their ability. Often the parental bickering comes at the very time that the child has a problem and needs help, or has had an experience which needs to be evaluated in the light of calm adult insight. Particularly difficult is the situation for an older child, perhaps most often a son, who sees a mother beaten or threatened. He may be physically too small to interfere but mature enough to feel highly frustrated. He may be perplexed as to his duty, torn by internal conflict. He may interfere, only to aggravate the whole sorry situation. These are the children who become hard, bitter, calculating, revengeful, full of hate for a parent or an entire family group.

Finally, it should be emphasized that both the process of quarreling as a form of family interaction and the assessment of its meaning for child development must be approached in terms of class differentials. At lower class levels, quarreling is much more likely to involve physical violence. The physical mistreatment of mates and children is more common. In fact, a frequent justification for living with a man without benefit of clergy is that he is less given to physical violence when a lover than when he has the status of husband. In the upper classes, the more verbal forms of quarreling predominate, perhaps in large measure because an adequate linguistic equipment is available for quarreling purposes. The sharp slur or the stinging sentence takes the place of a poke in the eye. Similarly, there are class differentials in the extent to which children and neighbors are drawn into or become aware of the quarreling. These depend in part on the size of the home and its physical isolation or nearness in relation to other homes and families. A rereading of Chapter XIII will suggest various other points of class differences.

#### CULTURE CONFLICTS BETWEEN PARENTS

No two persons ever have exactly the same cultural background; hence every marriage represents, in the strictest sense of the word, the union of two personality types between whom there are instances of culture conflict. Many of these, however, are minor in character and can be adjusted with a modicum of difficulty; some are more serious and rend the family life in twain. How serious these may be for marital

<sup>9</sup> Ernest W. Burgess and Leonard S. Cottrell, *Predicting Success or Failure in Marriage*, Prentice-Hall, Inc., New York, 1939, chap. 7.

relationships has been shown in studies made by Burgess and Cottrell and others.<sup>10</sup> Our present concern is with the more serious of such culture conflicts between parents, with reference to the processes of child development. Three kinds of these conflicts will be considered briefly.

### *Conflicts over Religious Differences.*

The diverse origins of the American people, coupled with complete freedom of religious worship, have resulted naturally in a great variety of organized religious groups in the United States. The federal Census of Religious Bodies shows how extensive their number has become. The census of 1926 listed forty-four different denominations, each with more than 50,000 members, and 171 smaller organizations with less than 50,000 each. If, on the other hand, the data are simplified by classification in terms of the outstanding popular denominational groupings, such as Baptist, Methodist, Episcopalian, Roman Catholic, etc., the census of 1936 reveals eight such groups, each with a membership in excess of one million. In addition to the various denominations and sects, there are the atheists, the agnostics, and other varieties of those who reject, partially or completely, some form of church affiliation. In view of this general situation and the emphasis upon the role of individual choice in marriage in this country, it is evident, first, that a large number of interdenominational marriages will occur, and second, that all kinds of possible combinations will occur.

*The Social Significance of Religious Differences.* To appreciate the significance of such marriages, it is necessary to recall the social significance of religious differences. In all religions, there is an interpenetration of religion into the other aspects of social life and organization. This is particularly true in regard to family life and the mores of behavior, both of which are areas which organized religion considers as fields for its special authority. This interrelationship is most marked in a country like India, where religion is identified with the caste system and involves the whole range of social life. In the United States, the interrelationship, while less marked, is still of great importance. In some cases, religion is identified with group history and class status; in others, it is intertwined with ethnic origin, and in still others, with the general paucity of compensations of life, the church involving a large

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

part of the organized life of the group. How important even the smaller sect may be in this connection has been pointed out recently by Clark in his analysis of Canadian experience. Sects, he says, arise usually as revolutionary forces in social as well as in religious life, they are often dominated by a personnel recruited from one class, not infrequently they are forced into politics, so that, in the course of its history, the sect becomes a culture complex of religious, social, and political ideas.<sup>11</sup>

What all this comes to is that the religious labels which men use are symbolic of fundamental cultural differences. Roman Catholicism, sociologically considered, is not merely a theological system or a traditional ritual; it is a culture complex. Methodism is not just a form of worship; it is a way of living and thinking. The name Quaker or Friend serves to identify more than simplicity in church architecture; it is a demeanor, a way of dealing with life situations, a set of values. These larger aspects of religion, intertwined with the minutiae of living, are centered particularly in the intimate, familial aspects of life, an area which organized religious groups invariably reserve as their own special field of dominance. In other words, a marriage between members of different religious groups is not merely a union between two persons who happen to "go to different churches," to be resolved with no more effort than a casual broad-mindedness about a place and form of worship; it represents a supposedly permanent relationship between people who have been reared with fundamental differences in ways of living and thinking.

*Historical Confirmation.* Injunctions against intermarriage between religious groups are age-old. The union of Gentile and Jew, for example, has been frowned upon from the beginning, as witness Deuteronomy vii, 1-4: "When the Lord thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and shall cast out many nations before thee, . . . thou shalt make no covenant with them, . . . neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son . . ." These prohibitions were repeated with equal directness by the later prophets, and were generally observed through the centuries. It is significant to note that as late as the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, Draschler found that in New York City, where one-half of the total

<sup>11</sup> S. D. Clark, "The Religious Sect in Canadian Politics," *American Journal of Sociology*, November, 1945, pp. 207-217.



Jewish population in the United States was then concentrated, only 1.1 per cent of the Jews married outside their faith.<sup>12</sup>

Similarly pronounced has been the historic attitude of the Roman Catholic Church. From the beginning, enactments by general Councils of the Church (Chalcedon, 388; Orleans, 538; Toledo, 589; Rome, 743) have enjoined Christians from marrying Jews. After the Reformation, these prohibitions were extended to Protestants, and the whole series of Council enactments and papal messages through the centuries have revealed the persistent opposition of the Roman Catholic hierarchy to marriage with non-Catholics. Whatever concessions have been made have been due to the strength of the Protestant opposition, the secularization of marriage laws and procedures, and the increasing role of civil authority in the regulation of marriage. Similarly, various Protestant groups have prohibited intermarriage with members of other churches, sometimes under pain of expulsion; all have brought pressure upon their members to marry within their religious group.<sup>13</sup>

The persistence of religious endogamy down to the present time is revealed by Kennedy in a study of intermarriage trends in New Haven. "The increasing intermarriage in New Haven is not general and indiscriminate but is channeled by religious barriers; and groups within the same religions tend to intermarry. Thus, Irish, Italians, and Poles intermarry mostly among themselves, and British-Americans, Germans, and Scandinavians do likewise, while Jews seldom marry Gentiles. . . . Our conclusion is, therefore, that . . . assimilation in this city is of a stratified character. . . . Religious differences function as the chief basis of stratification."<sup>14</sup>

*The Roman Catholic Attitude Toward Mixed Marriages.* Special problems arise because of the attitude of the Roman Catholic Church toward marriage between its members and non-members. Reference has already been made to its consistent opposition to such marriages through the centuries. Because of its conception of marriage as a sacrament and of the church as the divinely appointed custodian of all sacraments, the Roman Catholic Church has never been able to accept the principle of

<sup>12</sup> Julius Draschler, *Democracy and Assimilation*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1920.

<sup>13</sup> For a summary of the facts on intermarriage, consult the *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, vol. viii, pp. 151-154; for a more complete statement of the Roman Catholic position, see the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. ix, pp. 699 ff.

<sup>14</sup> Ruby J. R. Kennedy, "Single or Triple Melting Pot?" *American Journal of Sociology*, January, 1944, p. 339. The reader is also referred to Milton L. Barron, *People Who Intermarry*, Syracuse University Press, Syracuse, 1946.

state control and regulation of marriage, and has imposed its own regulations upon its members. The existing policy is based on the revised code of the canon law of 1918 which, while it reiterates opposition to mixed marriages, permits them under the following conditions: first, that the Catholic partner be allowed free exercise of his religion; second, that all the offspring be baptized and reared as Catholics; third, that the Catholic partner promise to do all he can to convert the non-Catholic; fourth, that the non-Catholic make his promises in writing; and, fifth, that the marriage take place in the presence of an accredited priest and two witnesses.<sup>15</sup> Such a position obviously leaves no basis for self-expression, or even self-respect, for a person affiliated with another church body.

*Significance for the Child.* It has been pointed out that religious differences are cultural in character, that they are pervasive in scope, that they find expression in the minutiae of daily living, and that they center chiefly in family life. To the extent that the personalities of the parents have been molded by their religious culture, and to the degree with which they identify themselves with their religious groups, religious differences between the parents become significant, both for marital relations and for child development. From the standpoint of the child, it means that the family's cultural background is divided, with inevitable conflicts in family life.

These conflicts come to a focus more sharply in the rearing of children than in any other aspect of the family's life, for child rearing, as pointed out in an earlier chapter, is essentially a series of decisions by the parents. Two periods of the child's life in particular are involved: one is early childhood; the other, adolescence. In both periods, crucial decisions have to be made, both periods are emphasized as of outstanding importance in the process of personality formation. The problems at issue may begin with the practice of birth control and the child's coming; they include the religious rites of infancy, such as baptism; the selection of a name, a Sunday school, a school, a church, social contacts; and patterns of behavior and moral teachings of all kinds.

The conflict between the parents may take many forms. Most frequently, perhaps, it is a struggle to control the child's development;

<sup>15</sup> For a study, chiefly statistical, of mixed marriages from the Catholic point of view, see Gerald J. Schnepf, "Mixed Marriages," in *The Family Today*, National Catholic Welfare Conference, Washington, 1945, pp. 107-115. See also Clyde V. Kiser and P. K. Whelpton, "Social and Psychological Factors Affecting Fertility," *Millbank Memorial Fund Quarterly*, January, 1944, p. 93.

often, too, the undertones indicate that the parents are trying to dominate each other through their child. Since these conflict situations are often accompanied by the separation of the parents, the conflict frequently takes the form of a struggle for the possession of the child, in which the larger kinship group may join. Sometimes this struggle takes the form of seeking to select, on the basis of religious affiliation, the child-caring agency to which the child is to be committed. In many cases the conflict expresses itself in less overt form. One parent may submit, ostensibly, to the demands of the other but seek to undermine the latter's hold over the child. In still other cases, one parent acquiesces, but with an obvious air of defeatism which may not be lost or without effects on the child. There are the families of toleration, so-called, in which both sets of demands are accepted. The child goes to mass at the Roman Catholic Church in the morning, and to the Methodist Sunday school in the afternoon. One Sunday the family plays cards and drinks beer with one set of relatives; the next Sunday the Sabbath is observed with meticulous correctness in the company of another group. To younger children especially, all this may be highly confusing. There are also tolerant families in which nothing is settled, nothing accepted. There is the tolerance of a neutral indifference. Finally, we must include those apparently unsatisfactory arrangements in families whereby all the children of one sex follow the religion of one parent, and those of the other sex, that of the other parent.

### *Marriages Between Ethnic Groups.*

A second group of family conflict situations grows out of the intermarriage of ethnic groups in the United States. This is another result of the heterogeneity of our population. Such marriages are largely intercultural, although the degree of cultural differences varies considerably with the groups involved.

*Extent of Ethnic Intermarriages.* The extent of ethnic intermarriages varies naturally with the composition of the population, the persistence of ethnic communities in which the continuance of the Old World cultures is fostered and a sentiment against intermarriage is cultivated, and the predominating nativity class. Studies made in New York City, New Haven, Conn., New York State other than New York City, and elsewhere warrant the following conclusions: (1) the rate of ethnic intermarriage has been increasing; (2) about one-third of all marriages in heterogeneous urban centers in recent years have

been interethnic; (3) when internativity marriages are included, the proportion approximates one-half; (4) the percentages vary considerably from one ethnic group to another, being relatively low for Jews, Italians, Irish, Poles, and British Americans, and higher for some of the northern and northwestern European groups. It was pointed out earlier that ethnic intermarriages are largely channeled by religious barriers.<sup>16</sup>

An idea of the extent of international marriages on a state-wide basis before the outbreak of the Second World War can be gathered from an analysis of the 1939 report of the Bureau of Vital Statistics of the Department of Health of New York State. Of a total of 3421 foreign-born residents of New York outside of New York City, who married during the year, 1007, or 29 per cent, married women who were native-born white of native-born white parents; 532, or 15.5 per cent, married brides who were native-born of foreign-born or mixed parents of a national origin other than that of the groom; and 231, or almost 7 per cent, married foreign-born brides of a national origin other than their own. In other words, a total of 1770, or slightly more than half, married into another national origin group, or into a nativity group at least two generations removed from their own. Similarly, of 10,384 native-born grooms of foreign or mixed parentage, 5311, or 51 per cent, married into the native-born nativity group, or into national origin groups other than their own.<sup>17</sup>

*Recent Developments.* Two recent developments in regard to inter-ethnic marriages call for special comment. One comprises the international marriages which have resulted from the Second World War. Since 1941, millions of American soldiers have gone to the ends of the world in pursuit of the war effort, and as yet uncounted thousands of them have married wives in the countries to which they were assigned. Marriages with English, Irish, and Australian women loom particularly large in number, but the range is far more extensive. Most of these marriages were consummated against the background of the romantic reaction of youth to the psychology of war, without knowledge

<sup>16</sup> Draschler, *op. cit.*, pp. 146-147; Kennedy, *op. cit.*; James H. S. Bossard, *Marriage and the Child*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1940, chap. 5; J. V. de Porte, "Marriage in the State of New York, with Special Reference to Nativity," *Human Biology*, Vol. III, 1931, pp. 376-396; and Edmund Brunner, *Immigrant Farmers and Their Children*, Garden City Pub. Co., Inc., New York, 1929.

<sup>17</sup> Department of Health of New York State, Division of Vital Statistics, *Sixtieth Annual Report*, 1939, vol. ii, pp. 220-225.

of the "civilian nature" of the grooms, and often with a rather distorted conception of the nature of American life on the part of the brides. These unions pose a problem of marital relations, but their implications for child rearing may be as great, if not greater. Many of these women are facing the responsibilities of motherhood, as well as wifehood, in a strange country to which they have been transported suddenly, and without knowledge of much of the information, detailed and otherwise, that effective motherhood entails.

A second, and specialized, development of this is seen when the marriages are between American men (or women) in the services and mates who derive from enemy countries. Here the complications are similar in kind but likely to be exaggerated in degree and scope. Cultural differences tend to be exaggerated, as well as considered against an emotionally tinged background that only a relatively few can consider with complete objectivity. Moreover, child development in these families must be viewed in a longer perspective. Will the gulf between the countries involved be maintained, narrowed, or widened? Will crisis relations be renewed in another generation?<sup>18</sup> Many children of marriages consummated a generation ago between British and Germans and Americans and Germans have had to face during the Second World War the complications of their familial heritage. War, it must be remembered, aggravates feelings of nationality, makes us more aware of national differences, and recalls national origins even when they go back several generations.

### *Marriages Between Social Classes.*

Recognition of the reality of social classes, as well as of their cultural significance, has been rather recent in the United States, and is still only partial in degree. The result is that relatively little is known about interclass marriages, their extent, and their meaning for marital relations and for child development. Enough is known, however, to indicate the fruitfulness of this area for research studies. Some of the problems which need to be considered will be mentioned here. To what extent are class lines crossed in marriage? What is the social distance between the classes united? For example, in any particular case does upper upper mate with upper lower, or is it lower upper with lower middle, or merely upper upper with lower upper? What are the

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Henrietta Leslie, *Mrs. Fischer's War*, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1931, for a life-span study of the son of a British-German marriage prior to the First World War.

cultural elements which differ? For example, the religious element may be the same but the linguistic and artistic elements may differ widely. Obviously, too, differing elements in the culture have differing significance for family life. The sex pattern, for instance, will be highly significant. Studies now being made reveal the most striking differences in the forms of sex behavior at various class levels. The sex mores differ, as do the concept of the sex role in marriage, the requirements of sex adjustment in marriage, the aspects of sex relationships which are considered important, sex experience in marriage, the use of contraceptives, and many other points. Culture differentials in the rearing of children have been indicated in Chapter XIII and will serve to suggest how numerous may be the points of issue in interclass marriages in the field of child development.

#### *General Observations on Bicultural Families.*

Highly important as the crossing of the cultural line in marriage is, whether religion or class or nationality,<sup>19</sup> the resultant family situations are not easy to study, especially in their deeper meaning for the personality development of the members. Three complicating factors seem to be of primary importance. First, such marriages usually are at first based on a good deal of love and affection, strong enough to overcome the resistance of cultural differences. Common observation suggests that often a strong physical attraction is involved in such unions. As a result, many intercultural marriages begin with certain added elements of attraction, especially significant in the earlier years when physical and romantic bonds in marriage are relatively more important. Second, another unusual bond in these unions is the pride of the partners, equivalent in many cases to stubbornness. This arises from the fact that these marriages have usually been consummated in the face of contrary advice from friends and relatives. If this pressure is strong enough, the partners may proceed to marry in a spirit akin to defiance. Subsequently, unwillingness to admit that a mistake has been made may keep these marriages from disruption or may hold them together longer than might otherwise be the case.

The third complicating factor has to do with the personalities of those who consummate mixed marriages. Is there a selective process in such marriages? Are they confined largely to certain personality types?

<sup>19</sup> The outstanding conclusion of the Burgess and Cottrell study is an emphasis on the role of cultural differences in family tensions and maladjustments.

of family life. What seems to happen in many bicultural families is a continuing disagreement, coupled with a determined effort to stay together. There is attraction between the parents, and they could be happy if it were not for these irreconcilable differences. They cannot agree to agree, nor can they agree to disagree.

All these differences, cultural and personal, within both the immediate family and the kinship group, come to a focus on the children. They become particularly pronounced in relation to specific decisions which tend to fix the relatively permanent status of the children. Such decisions become involved with the self-respect of the parents and the pride of the respective kinship groups, as well as their deepest cultural values. Behind the crisis periods thus precipitated, the "feel" of the conflict situation is ever present. This has been expressed poignantly by one who was reared in a bicultural family. "There never was a time in my life," he writes, "when I first became conscious of religion. Like the concept of 'mother,' it seemed always to have been present as a great and awful question upon which adults did not agree, and upon which they would brook no discussion."<sup>21</sup>

The conflicts may focus upon one cultural element, as in the case of religion, or they may comprehend the entire ethos. They may express themselves in a continuing tug of war, with overt recognition of the points at issue; or they may reach a compromise in ways and degrees which vary with the intricate complexities of human situations. The significant fact here is that the children come to personify the problems at issue, and their personalities reflect the conflicts, compromises, and adjustments that are made. To restate somewhat the fundamental principle of this volume, the personality of the child is the reflection of the family culture, of its conflicts and tensions and differences, as well as of its agreements and harmonies.

#### BROKEN FAMILIES

The third group of family situations with which this chapter deals comprises those in which the personal or culture conflicts, or both types, between the parents have led to a termination, for the time being, of the family relationship. The termination may be permanent, as in annulment or divorce; it may be uncertain and unsettled, as in desertion or separation.

<sup>21</sup> From the files of the William T. Carter Foundation.

*Extent of the Problem.*

Information on the extent of marital separations is contained in the United States Census Bureau's data on "spouses absent." Ogburn, analyzing this material, makes the following conclusions: (1) There were in 1940 between 1.5 and 1.6 million husbands with wives absent, and approximately the same number of wives with husbands away. (2) The number of separated couples is 5.4 per cent of the number of married couples living together. (The term separated is used when the husband or wife is not living in the family domicile and is neither widowed nor divorced.) (3) For every 100 married men living with their wives, there were 7 or 8 separated or divorced men. Among women the ratio was slightly higher, 1 to 12. (4) It is the very young married persons who are most often separated. Among young men fifteen to nineteen years of age, for every 100 married and living with their wives, 27 were living away from their wives. (5) It seems probable that from 33 to 41 per cent of the separated couples had no children, though the percentage might have been larger. (6) Among Negroes, the rate of separation is about three times as high as among whites. (7) There are only about half as many separations, relatively speaking, on farms as in the cities. (8) The states that have grown most rapidly have the highest rates of separation. (9) There is no apparent relationship between difficulty in securing a divorce and the prevalence of separation.<sup>22</sup>

The number of children in the United States whose parents are living apart because of desertion, divorce, separation, or annulment is not known. Taking the number of children who are affected by divorce each year, and applying actuarial methods, Davis estimates that in 1940 there were 1,533,000 children under 18 whose parents have been divorced. This is 3.6 per cent of all children under 18.<sup>23</sup> Data from selected areas indicate that the divorce rate has been increasing since 1940, and estimates of all students of the family agree that it will increase markedly in the postwar years. In other words, the number of children affected by divorce, now somewhere between 150,000 and 200,000 a year, is bound to increase, absolutely and relatively. One other statistical fact about these children should be noted. Because

<sup>22</sup> W. F. Ogburn, "Marital Separations," *American Journal of Sociology*, January, 1944, pp. 316-323.

<sup>23</sup> Kingsley Davis, "Children of Divorced Parents, Sociological and Statistical Analysis," *Law and Contemporary Problems*, Summer, 1944, pp. 713-714.



divorce occurs more often in the early years of marriage, the children involved are in the lower age brackets. Marshall and May's study of Maryland and Ohio children shows that 27 and 31 per cent, respectively, were four years of age and under, and 38 and 31 per cent, respectively, ranged from five to nine inclusive.<sup>24</sup>

The foregoing figures, enormous though they are, do not include other forms of marital separation. There is very little information on the extent of desertion in the general population, other than the Ogburn summary already cited. Patterson, in his study of desertion in Philadelphia, found that the number of new cases of desertion and non-support each year was almost twice as large as the number of divorce petitions filed, and almost three times as great as the number of divorces granted.<sup>25</sup> When we remember that the divorce data are relatively complete and that the new court cases of desertion and non-support constitute only a part of the problem of desertion, the disproportion becomes even more pronounced. As in the case of divorce, most desertions occur during the early years of married life. Mowrer, for example, found that in 47.7 per cent of 2661 cases in Chicago the individuals had been married less than five years.<sup>26</sup>

Studies of desertion emphasize the fact that children figure more frequently in desertion than in divorce cases. In fact, so many cases of desertion occur just prior to the birth of a child that some students have listed this as a cause of desertion.

### *Broken Families and Child Development.*

A great deal has been written about the relationship of broken homes to such problems as juvenile delinquency and child dependency. Particularly have the effects of divorce been emphasized, both in the literature on child problems<sup>27</sup> and in modern novels and the drama.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Leon C. Marshall and Geoffrey May, *The Divorce Court*, Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore, vol. i (Maryland), 1932, p. 79; vol. ii (Ohio), 1933, p. 112.

<sup>25</sup> S. Howard Patterson, *Family Desertion and Non-Support*, University of Pennsylvania thesis, Philadelphia, 1922, p. 328.

<sup>26</sup> Ernest R. Mowrer, *Family Disorganization*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1927, p. 101.

<sup>27</sup> Marshall and May, *op. cit.*; T. Earl Sullenger, *Social Determinants in Juvenile Delinquency*, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, 1936.

<sup>28</sup> Among the novels are Wilson, *The Kenworthys*, 1925; Johnson, *Children of Divorce*, 1927; Wharton, *The Children*, 1928, Sedgwick, *Philippa*, 1930; Spencer, *The Incompetents*, 1933; Savage, *Summer Hail*, 1936; Eliot, *Angel's Murth*, 1936; and Pope, *The Sentence of Youth*, 1936. Among the plays are Crothers, *Susan and God*, 1937; Ford, *What Imagination Will Do*, 1928; and

Somewhat less, however, has been said about its meaning for the processes of child development. Thus considered, some of the facts which stand out will be briefly summarized.

To understand what the breakup of a home means to a child, one must go back to the fundamental functioning and values of the monogamous family. These grow out of a relatively permanent union between a father and a mother, each of whom plays a basic role in the culture-transmitting and personality-forming processes of family life. Not only does each parent bring his heritage, but each also colors on a sex basis what is transmitted. That is to say, the father brings a male, the mother a female, culture. Thus each parent is not only an addition but also a complement to the other in the child-rearing process. When a family breaks up, this normal process is interfered with, to an extent and with a significance which vary on the basis of the particular circumstances involved.

#### *Sequences to Family Disruption.*

Three general sets of such circumstances are of basic importance. First are the new family relations which the parents establish. Four types of these relations most commonly appear. Both parents may live apart, neither one remarrying. This is perhaps the least frequent. Or one parent may remarry, and the other not, and the new couple may or may not have children. Again, both parents may remarry, with the alternate possibilities of other children, past and future. Finally, either or both parents may establish a new romantic relationship without benefit of clergy. Such illicit unions are found with particular frequency, as already noted, at the lower class levels.

A second set of circumstances of basic importance involves the disposal that is made of the children in the broken family. There are a number of possibilities. The child or children may live with one parent, by agreement of all concerned. Such an agreement may be observed with varying degrees of good faith. Second, there may be an agreement for the children to be shared, with a shifting from one parent to the other, such agreements again varying in fidelity of observance by either parent. Third, there may be a struggle, acute, chronic, or inter-

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Atlas, *Wednesday's Child*, 1934. For a fuller discussion of these and other literary discussions, the reader should consult James Barnet, *Divorce and the American Divorce Novel, 1858-1937*, 1939; and Donald Nelson Koster, *The Theme of Divorce in American Drama, 1871-1939*, 1942, both of which are University of Pennsylvania thesis publications.

mittent, for the custody and control of the child's development. The struggle may take place between the parents, or it may be between the opposing groups of kinsfolk. Fourth, the child may be placed in an institution or a foster home, such cases constituting a large proportion of dependent children thus cared for. Finally, the court may award custody of the child. In many cases, decrees for maintenance and custody are necessary; they are often followed by appeals, modifications, and extensive litigation. The courts supposedly award custody on the basis of the welfare of the child, but the decision as to what this means depends on the judgment of the court. No uniform standards exist to guide such decisions, so in actual practice they depend on the judge's special knowledge and experience, his knowledge of the family, the number of cases handled, the time available for each case, and the general attitude of the community. One principle usually observed is that custody goes to the so-called innocent party. This status of "innocence" grows out of the American legal principle that a divorce must be granted not on the basis of mutual consent, but as an award to an innocent or aggrieved party. Obviously such "innocence" has nothing to do with the security and best interests of the child.<sup>29</sup>

The third and possibly the most important set of circumstances involves the attitudes and behavior of separated or divorced parents toward their children. A number of well-defined patterns can be discerned. There are the parents who compete for the affection (and perhaps custody) of the child. This competition is prone to take unwise forms—an undue playing up to the child, overindulgence, displays of extravagance, and the like. Again, in many cases, the parents continue to fight each other through their children. Either or both parents, in part as an expression of personal animus and in part as a compensation for marital unhappiness, seek consolation, revenge, release, prestige, or security through their children. The result is that the child becomes the special victim of parental interference. As the only remaining link between former mates, he becomes the agency through which they can express their resentment toward life and each other. Such exploitation of a child takes many specific forms—he may be utilized to spy on a parent, the mother may incite the child to make all sorts of expensive demands on the father, or the child may be utilized to bear tidings of one parent's new-found happiness with another mate. Third, the parent

<sup>29</sup> For a detailed analysis of the legal aspects of such cases, the reader is referred to Kingsley Davis, *op. cit.*

may utilize the breakup of the family as the occasion to reject physically a child who was never wanted. It is particularly true that the child who is rejected is identified with the marital partner who is rejected. Finally, it must be emphasized that the experience of passing through marital crises is enough to lessen the parental effectiveness of many persons. In places where a stigma attaches to divorce, the parent must face and adjust to this. In any event, there is for the parents a continuing awareness or consciousness of their crises. Under the stress of all this, the child and his problem may be forgotten or neglected. Parental absorption in their own crises poses many a child problem. At times, the child not only sees his problems neglected, but is further utilized to bolster a faltering ego; i.e., his loyalty is sought to atone for the self-condemnation of the marital failure.

### *Family Disruption from the Standpoint of the Child.*

Finally it is essential to consider all these marital and family situations from the standpoint of the child. The aspects which appear most generally in these cases will be summarized briefly.

1. Perhaps the basic situation which a broken home creates for a child is internal conflict. A child ordinarily has some emotional attachment to both parents. This feeling is independent of what other persons think of the parents, and of the parents' relations with each other. In many cases, people, including parents, do not understand this. When the family is broken and the parents separate, the child is called upon to make a decision which he finds difficult to make, which he is unwilling and often unprepared to make. Yet the very fact of his parents' separation necessitates it. Often the parents further complicate the situation by demanding that the decision be made. The problems thus created may be particularly difficult for older children who have an insight into the merits of the case and are also aware of their own economic necessities or personal advantages.

2. In many cases, the child goes from a broken home to a home in which he is a stepchild. What this involves has been referred to in an earlier chapter. In the case of a home broken by divorce, however, there are particular difficulties. The child must adjust to a stepparent while the real parent of that sex is alive. He may resemble the parent that is being replaced—a constant reminder of an earlier, unpleasant experience. Other children, born to the new union, compete and naturally have a better hold upon the parents. The child may resent the

parent with which circumstances force him to live. He may resent the inferior position assigned to the parent with whom he does not live.

3. The child who is shifted back and forth between two parents must adjust to two different domestic milieus, and possibly to two stepchild situations. The two homes will differ, and in various ways. They may operate on different economic levels. The religious background may be different. Social differentiation may be present, perhaps in marked degree. Thus the child must learn to live at two domestic levels. A wide range of personal habits may have to be altered in going from one family to the other.

4. The foregoing suggests the problem of the restraints that are placed upon the child, on his conversational habits and other social relationships. Care must be taken not to speak of the other parent; reference to the past may be taboo. How should the new parent be addressed? How should he be described to friends? Is it advisable to bring friends home? How much should be told about the past? What comments are in order as one goes from one parent to the other? These are questions which merit the insight and restraint of an adult; for a child they must be both difficult and confusing.

5. The child with a broken-home background cannot but make comparisons with the home life of other children. When contacts with other children show that they have parents who live happily together, feelings of inferiority, self-pity, disappointment, or resentment may prevail. The average child is not a philosopher, nor is it of any comfort to know the statistical probabilities for a child to live in a complete and happy home.

6. The child, like the parent, carries the burden of a continuing awareness of his problems. There may be a vivid consciousness of the events which led to the separation of the parents, there may have been an emotional or dramatic high point in the separation, there may be the burning recollection of publicity and court procedures, there may be a gnawing awareness of being regarded always as a problem. The sense of disturbance that comes from being part of a record, written in unknown words and kept at some vague place, is something that makers of case records all too frequently overlook. Again, a child comes at an early age to sense the attitudes of kinsfolk, friends, and the community. The child from a broken home quickly becomes aware of furtive glances, incompleting sentences, crude innuendoes, and tactless remarks from persons preoccupied, thoughtless, or vicious, as the case may be.

The moral condemnation of divorce attaches to him and makes his position more difficult than it would be otherwise.

7. One must not overlook the fact that the child develops attitudes toward the parents which become an integral part of the situation. Not understanding the purposes of the parents' interference or their attempts to use him to maintain a guerrilla warfare with the other parent, the child may become confused; understand them, there may develop disappointment and bitterness. Or he may develop a panicky terror over the prospects of a new parental alliance. Not a few children from broken homes come sooner or later to reject one or both of their parents with the callous air of "a plague on both your houses." This may subsequently take the form of a critical attitude toward the institution of marriage, or at least a critical awareness of it. Mowrer, for example, thinks that in this way divorce is often passed on from one generation to another.<sup>80</sup>

It requires no complete psychoanalytic equipment to understand that in some cases the child will identify himself with one of the estranged parents. This identification usually involves the parent of the opposite sex and, in early childhood, operates chiefly at the unconscious level. That is to say, the child's unconscious is identified with the unconscious of the parent. Because of this principle of psychological identification, the disturbing forces which lie below the level of conscious adult life are absorbed by the child. It is in this connection that the feelings of guilt, failure, apprehension, defeatism, bitterness, and the like, which many divorced or separated mates develop, become so insidiously important in the development of their children.

There is the added complication that the attitudes of child to parent and of parent to child change from time to time. The mother who is divorced by her husband when he has found a new attraction, clings to her child by way of comfort. She stimulates him to become a foe of his other parent. Later, when she finds a new romantic interest, she discovers that her child is a handicap. Or he may be critical of the new spouse-to-be. Thus the child may find himself at odds with, or rejected by, both parents. Or the father, established in his new happiness, may become reconciled with the child, who now leaves his mother. These shifting loyalties complicate the child's attitudes, as well as increase his general insecurity.

<sup>80</sup> Ernest R. Mowrer, "Divorce and Readjustment," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, March, 1932, pp. 191-196.

8. Finally, what cannot be emphasized too much is that the disruption of a child's home life breaks the continuity of his emotional and intellectual development. After all, what is involved is a crisis situation in the most intimate and sensitive aspect of his life, and the reverberations that follow extend into every phase of his life. The continuity of his school life, and certainly the quality of his school work, are disturbed. Old friends may be lost, new ones must be gained. Life, with its demands and values, may have to be faced at a new level. Economic circumstances as a rule are disturbed, demanding curtailments of many kinds.

### *The Other Side of Family Disruption.*

Not all family disruptions are attended with bitterness or followed by aggravated personal problems for those involved. There are couples who are divorced with a minimum of ill feeling. Both parents may act like mature adults, frankly facing a mutual mistake and cooperating in the adjustment of their respective problems. There are divorces in which there is a substantial carry-over of good will, respect, and even affection. It would be an interesting research problem to determine how frequently the semblance of a natural family continues after the legal family has been dissolved.

Fred Blank divorced his wife 26 years ago, the mother retaining the custody of their son. Three years later, he married again. This second marriage apparently has been quite happy, and two children have been born to this union. The first wife has not remarried. She says she is still in love with her former husband, and both acknowledge that they have had sex relations a number of times since their divorce. The first wife visits him at his office from time to time, and he has continued to act as her business adviser, as well as contributing to the support of their son. Recently, the son has entered the army, and father, mother and son had a number of visits together. The second Mrs. Blank apparently knows nothing of all this, and Mr. Blank insists that it has not affected his relations with her.

Finally, whatever one's theories about separation or divorce may be, the fact remains that some marriages are a tribulation for all concerned. The child is apt to be the special scapegoat in these cases. The termination of such families, and possibly the new deal of another family setting, may mean only the stimulus of better conditions and new opportunities for the child and possibly the parents too. Divorce not infrequently is a solution which closes a whole chapter of family turmoil.

## FAMILY CONFLICT AND THE CHILD IN CONTEMPORARY CULTURE

It seems not amiss to recall, by way of concluding this chapter, certain features of family culture in contemporary American society which make family conflict situations of such great importance in child development.

Four features stand out with impressing clarity. First is the prevailing emphasis upon, and the relative independence of, the immediate family as the unit of family relationships; second, and complementary to the first, is the secondary importance and lessened responsibility of the kinship group; third is the resultant high emotional concentration within the immediate family; and fourth is the equalitarian principle in regard to the child.<sup>81</sup> Taken together—and in many ways they are but so many aspects of the same process—they carry great meaning for children in homes with conflict situations. Three results are noted as of primary importance. The first is that the development of the child's personality, the satisfaction of his deepest personal and emotional needs, as well as responsibility for his economic and social maintenance, rest upon the small immediate family of modern times. Second, when this unit falters or fails, there is no larger kinship group to take charge, to which parent and child can turn to assume responsibility. Third, there is no accepted principle on the basis of which responsibility for the child is guaranteed by parents, except the uncertain personal opinions of legally trained jurists. As pointed out in the third chapter, the contemporary child in the American small-family system views the world from a very narrow ledge. When that ledge is wobbly, insecurity is as pronounced as it is inevitable.

## SUMMARY

1. Many families are characterized by a lack of harmony among their members in personal relations or cultural patterns, or both. These situations, which have been considered chiefly in their bearing upon husband-wife relationships, are also significant for child development.

2. Quarreling is one form of conflict. It prevails to some extent in virtually every family. In a more exaggerated degree, it takes many forms of expression, each of which has its own meaning for child development. Parents who quarrel excessively create many problems for their children.

<sup>81</sup> For a suggestive discussion of these factors, see Kingsley Davis, *op. cit.*, pp. 700-710.



3. A second group of conflict situations grows out of cultural differences between the parents. These may focus upon some one cultural element, such as religion, or they may comprehend the range of a class or the entire ethos. They may express themselves in a continuing tug of war, or shade into the more subtle strains of compromise. In each and all events, these cultural conflicts express themselves in the personalities of the child members of these families.

4. The third group of conflict situations are those in which the unity of the family has disappeared, as in desertion, divorce, and the like. An enormous number of children are thus affected. Among the problems which such children face are basic internal conflicts; life in stepparent situations; frequent shifts from one family milieu to another; usually restraints upon behavior and conversation; feelings of inferiority, self-pity, resentment, or disappointment; continuing preoccupation with personal problems; the development of critical attitudes toward parents; and breaks in the continuity of emotional and intellectual development.

5. There is sometimes another side to the termination of a family. It may mean a solution of unhappy situations and the opportunity of a new chance. This may be particularly fortunate and promising in the case of younger children.

6. The problems for children in conflict family situations are particularly important in our contemporary culture because of (a) the prevailing emphasis upon the immediate family, (b) the lessened responsibility of the kinship group, (c) a high emotional concentration within the immediate family, and (d) the equalitarian principle in regard to child care.

## Families Under Stress

There are two distinct approaches to the study of the family and its problems. One is to consider it, relatively speaking, as a unity in itself, with emphasis upon the family situations of its members—their interaction with each other and their cultural relatedness. It is from this point of view that the preceding chapters have been written, with reference primarily to the development of the child. The other approach sees the family as part and parcel of the larger society, stressing the continuing interrelations between the two, and giving particular emphasis to the ways in which the family reflects and reacts to changes and forces in the social organization as a whole. A number of the current sociological books on the family are written, wholly or in large part, from this point of view.

Whatever the relative emphasis or approach, it is clear that family situations cannot be considered without reference to the impact of external forces; and obviously, the section on problem families would not be complete without recognition of the large number of families in which problems of internal relations arise from the stress of outside influences. Such problem situations result most clearly from major social crises, such as war or widespread economic depression, but the principle involved has a broader and more constantly recurring application. This chapter seeks to describe selected problem families in which serious difficulties in internal relationships result from the impact of external factors. For purpose of convenience, the discussion is organized around the factors considered, and these are grouped under six heads: (1) physical bases of home life; (2) the stress of occupational requirements; (3) the impact of residential mobility; (4) economic pressures; (5) infringement upon the time-energy requirements of parenthood; and (6) the stress of shame.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For an analysis, with illustrative case material, of external factors in relation to family situations, see James H. S. Bossard and Eleanor S. Boll, *Family Situations*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1943, chap. 8.

## PHYSICAL BASIS OF HOME LIFE

Family life has a physical setting, a material structure within which the family functions; and the character of this structure affects in many ways the nature of the functioning process. Perhaps no aspect of family life is exempt from its conditioning influence. This is the real essence of the housing problem. There are, to be sure, relationships between specific aspects of housing, such as the number of persons per room of prescribed size and the morbidity or mortality rates of the inhabitants, and often statistical evidence can be produced to establish such relationships; but the broader problem of housing concerns its adequacy for the maintenance of a normal family life. There is a sociology as well as an architecture of home planning. A house or apartment has too long and too largely been considered as a physical shelter to which the family must adjust its life. There is much more to be said with propriety about the adaptation of a physical structure to the life of its occupants. Just as we have come to emphasize the family as the matrix out of which develop the personalities of its members, so must housing be conceived as the means of providing facilities adequate for the family to function in these respects.

Thus considered, and viewed more particularly from the standpoint of the child, many aspects of the family's physical setting fall into their proper perspective—the possibility of a room of his own, with space for clothes, toys, and books; the nature of the sleeping arrangements; quietness for rest; sleep unbroken by household, adult, and neighborhood noises; separation of adults and child; a place to prepare his school work; a place, amid proper surroundings, to bring his friends; a place for all the members of the family to live their own lives, both as members of a family group and as individuals. Each of these items, and many others, could be separated for more complete analysis; they are both the minutiae and the substance of family life and of child development.

It is one of the tragic realities of life that many families live under the stress of housing inadequacies, and that these bear with particular heaviness upon the life of the children in these families. Included here is the home where privacy is unknown; where crowding imperils health and prevents comfort; where activity must be subdued because of the immediate presence of others; where the sick, aged, or irritable cannot be segregated; where the child must prepare his school work in

the only room available for the entire family group; and where the entertainment of friends, and even courtship, must be carried on in a room shared by the parents or next to their sleeping quarters. Both the size and the arrangement of living space are important.

Similarly important, particularly for the child, is the outside appearance of the home. This advertises the family's status to all who pass by or come to call. Children comment at an early age on the appearance of their friends' homes, and the attitudes of adults are revealed by studies of family budgets which show that in the lower-income groups preference is given to housing over food. To young and old alike, but especially to adolescents preoccupied with desires for social recognition and prestige, the appearance of the home flaunts their identification to all who have eyes to see. The key to the behavior problems of many adolescents is a home avoidance technique; they select their friends, conduct their courtships, and organize their lives in general so as not to bring their friends home.

The postwar period in particular has been plagued with a shortage of adequate housing facilities. Two factors have inevitably led to this rather serious condition. One was the cessation of residential construction during the war years; the other, the accelerated marriage rate in the same period. Between Pearl Harbor and the end of World War II, approximately seven million couples were married. During the war, many wives traveled from place to place, lived out of suitcases as it were, and adapted themselves to a transient life. Others, with their children, lived with their parents; still others lived under various make-shift arrangements which precluded anything like a normal family life. The postwar period saw, therefore, a four-year accumulation of new families searching for homes whose construction was postponed by wartime restrictions. What all this added up to was a national home-building task of huge proportions. Many of these families, and those who shared facilities with them, have been under serious stress.

Mention should be made, too, of certain groups of families who live under the stress of unusual housing arrangements. One of these groups is the families who live in trailers. Cowgill has studied trailer life<sup>2</sup> with revealing insight into the trailer family. Two-fifths of the 128 families he studied had child members, and some of his observations are

<sup>2</sup> Donald O. Cowgill, *Mobile Homes: A Study in Trailer Life*, American Council on Public Affairs, Washington, 1941.

particularly pertinent for child development. There is the obvious factor of overcrowding. This is clearly associated with the problem of privacy. He writes: "Privacy is an important factor in the development and maintenance of individual integrity. The French sociologist, Durkheim, expresses the opinion that satisfactory mental health, hence personality integration, is dependent upon achieving a balance between group life and individual life. One type of suicide results from too much individuation, and another from the opposite extreme of submergence of the individual in the group and his complete submission to collective representations. In trailer life we have a situation somewhat akin to the latter situation."<sup>3</sup> There are times in everyone's life when he needs to be alone. This need does not fit into the trailer scheme of life. Furthermore, the taboo against bodily exposure becomes difficult, if not impossible, to uphold in a trailer. Family quarrels are open to all; on the other hand, because of their isolation and the lack of a stable community life, trailer families commonly act together in many phases of life.

Similarly abnormal in physical setting for the family is hotel life. Hayner,<sup>4</sup> who has studied this problem, emphasizes its disorganizing effects upon family life, with particular reference to the failure of family ties to form in the depersonalized hotel atmosphere and the likelihood of previously established families disintegrating because of the lack of a common life to hold the members together. On the other hand, Burgess and Locke<sup>5</sup> question this in part, pointing out that hotel life makes for a social isolation of the family similar to the physical isolation of the farm family, so that the family is thrown more upon its own resources than in a well-integrated neighborhood environment. Unfortunately, these studies are concerned more with marital relations than child development. Obviously, the child reared in an apartment hotel lives an unusual life, and in many ways. He is unusually dependent upon his family. There is likely to be no immediately available play group. There is no neighborhood group. Most of the other families have no children. The majority of the adults are in the older age brackets. This makes for restraint in behavior. Much of his life is

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35.

<sup>4</sup> Norman Hayner, *Hotel Life*, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1936.

<sup>5</sup> Ernest W. Burgess and Harvey J. Locke, *The Family*, American Book Company, New York, 1945, p. 549.

of the "goldfish in the bowl" variety. Spontaneity becomes curiously out of place. For the child, hotel life is likely to be lived under the stress of restraint.

#### THE STRESS OF OCCUPATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Most families with children are confronted with two overshadowing problems—one, earning a living; the other, rearing their children. These two are interrelated in many ways, so that from time to time each interferes with the other, we are concerned here with the stress of workaday requirements. There are at last four types of situations in our industrial urban culture in which occupational requirements tend to interfere seriously with the child-rearing process.

1. The first is the father's employment away from home. This practice, so commonplace and so taken for granted today, is really a new aspect of family life which did not appear until modern industry removed economic functions from the home. Today, many fathers do not return to their homes for the noonday meal, and spend often considerable time in commuting to and from their jobs. All this takes the father away from home for a large part of the child's waking hours, with the result that the child is left largely to the care of the mother or of other women. Thus the period in which the child's dependence on the family is lengthening in point of years and extending in the scope of "administrative" decisions, the decreasing presence of the father makes for the increasing feminization of child rearing. It is true that in many families the minor decisions are left to the mother and the major ones are reserved for the father. One is tempted to speak of the modern "thermostatic father" who "goes on" and functions only when marked changes of "family temperature" occur.

2. The second is the increasing influx of women into gainful occupations away from home. This is far from a wartime development, as much recent discussion would imply. From 1880 to 1940, the percentage of all women sixteen years of age and over who were gainfully employed increased from 16.0 to 26.3 per cent. Both the First and the Second World War stimulated this trend tremendously. At the height of the recent war effort, about eighteen million women were employed. In June, 1946, the number stood at 16,710,000, thus indicating that most of the wartime increase have remained. It is significant to note that this over-all, long-time increase has occurred in spite of a decline in the percentages employed in both the younger and the older age groups;

the decline in the former was due to the prolongation of schooling, child labor legislation, and the influence of child welfare work in general, and that in the upper age group to the increasing retirement of workers at 65 years of age.

Two aspects of this movement are of special importance to the present discussion. One is its increasing spread among the upper classes. Much of the increasing employment of women, especially in normal times, involves a middle- and upper-class movement into trade, transportation, and professional occupations. The other is the marked increase in the proportion of married women employed outside of the home. In 1900, about one out of twenty (5.6 per cent) married women were in this group; in 1940, the percentage was 15.2. In 1900, 15.4 per cent of all working women were married; in 1940, the percentage was 35.5.

From the standpoint of the status of sex, these trends are spoken of as the economic emancipation of women, emphasizing the decline of their subservience to the male head of the house. Considered in their broader implications, these trends involve the readjustment of family life patterns, including the family's care of the children. One aspect of this is the declining use of older daughters for the care of younger siblings; another, the absence of mothers, particularly those with younger children, from the home. The latter is of particular significance. There are many ways in which these absences may be considered, and obviously such facts about them as time and duration are important. To the extent that the hours of employment are curtailed and adjusted to domestic and maternal requirements, as was done extensively in England during World War II, the effects upon children may be quite different than is ordinarily the case.<sup>6</sup> Similarly, the effects of additional income for the family must be weighed against the costs of the mother's absence, as must also the varying nature of the substitute arrangements and the differing personalities of the children and mothers involved.

Certain items in the costs to children of their mothers' employment away from home seem obvious and will be identified briefly. (a) The combined strain of being wife, mother, and outside employee tends to make mothers unduly tired, with consequent feelings of impatience and irritability. The emphasis, in the psychiatric approach to behavior,

<sup>6</sup> Women's Bureau, U. S. Department of Labor, *Part-Time Employment of Women in Wartime*, Special Bulletin No. 13, Washington, 1943.

upon the subtle and many-sided effects of the psychic atmosphere of the home makes this of great importance. Child rearing, it cannot be emphasized too often, is an exacting task, particularly in its demands upon the nervous energy of the parents. (b) There is the loneliness, emotional and otherwise, of the child whose mother is always away from home, or too tired. "My mother is so tired," cries a wartime adolescent, "that she won't even talk to me." (c) There is the child who feels neglected, who is neglected, and who rationalizes that neglect to justify the inevitable consequences of neglect. "They don't care what happens to me, why should I?" (d) Many children seize upon their parents' absence to run riot and to secure greater license than they otherwise could. (e) The working mother is less able to share with the child the impact of his daily adventures. One such adventure is going to school. The impact of the school upon the child, especially if it is a large school, is quite pronounced. The mere fact, especially for the younger child, that there is a mother to go to after the day's school experience is of great importance. Beyond the mere comfort of her presence, there is the need to tell someone of the day's experiences. This has both a therapeutic and an educational value. One of the basic functions of the home is to serve as an assessing station for the child; whether that station functions, and how, determines in large measure the meaning of the day's events for the child. The following case shows how what appeared to a child a serious affront is interpreted by the home as a happy experience:

Karen came home from school in tears. Mary, a classmate, had torn up her bus ticket. Mary, whose parents provided her with no bus tickets, did this so that Karen, who lived near to her, would be compelled to walk home from school. Karen interpreted this as a hurt, and was cross at Mary. Karen's mother, after listening to her patiently, suggested that Mary really must like her very much, and that what she really aimed to do was to have Karen walk home with her. Then, suddenly, the mother had a happy thought. "What do you suppose," she said to Karen, "would happen to daddy if the girls in his office liked him so much that they tore up his bus tickets? Poor daddy might not come home tonight until long after dark." Karen, who loved her daddy very much, was quite amused at this. The next afternoon, Karen and Mary walked home together to Karen's house and played happily until dinner time.<sup>7</sup>

(f) The mother's employment and absence from home affect her ability to render detailed services which children need—socks to be

<sup>7</sup> From the files of the William T. Carter Foundation.



darned, shoes to be brushed, ribbons ironed, dresses starched, buttons sewed on, etc.—or to stimulate and supervise the child's performance of these services for himself. Many of these services have to do with his appearance, which relates in turn to his conception of himself and to the attitude of other children; yet their nature is such that the working mother and her child may easily neglect them.

Ernestine had a part in her school play. Her working mother rushed there in time to see her daughter appear on the stage displaying an atrocious color combination and stockings with two holes showing. Shortly afterwards, the mother withdrew from employment. In her letter to her employer, she wrote that "every growing child needs a mother in the home."<sup>8</sup>

(g) Finally there are the whole series of supervisory and training services which children must obtain, if they do so at all, in their own homes. These have to do with such things as dietary habits, outlets for child energy, the vetoing of selected experiments with objects and persons, and the acquisition of the niceties of social behavior. Just as Sutherland concludes that crime is learned behavior growing out of differential association,<sup>9</sup> so also are courtesy, etiquette, manners, or their opposites. Socially approved behavior, too, is learned behavior, and its teaching is a parental task that no absent or overworked mother can discharge with adequacy. There is, as Marquand puts it, "so little time."<sup>10</sup>

3. Selected occupations of both fathers and mothers tend particularly to interfere with the child-rearing process. Among these are night jobs, with their complement of daytime sleeping. One phase of these jobs combines the late afternoon and early evening; another, the late night and early morning. Long working hours, combined with time-consuming commuting requirements, create another type of situation. Some occupations, even at relatively high income and status levels, involve frequent or continual absence from home in the evening hours. Train crews on transcontinental runs must be away from home for days at a time. Long-distance truck drivers have similarly exacting schedules. Traveling men may be away continuously for weeks and

<sup>8</sup> From the files of the William T. Carter Foundation.

<sup>9</sup> E. H. Sutherland, "White Collar Criminality," *American Sociological Review*, February, 1940, pp. 1-12.

<sup>10</sup> John Marquand, *So Little Time*, Little, Brown and Company, Boston, 1943.

months. Common observation will place a long list of jobs in this general category.

The problem-creating aspects of such occupations arise chiefly out of the following facts. First, the hours of employment remove the parents from the home during the hours when the child is not at school or asleep. This means that the ordinary relationships between parent and child have little or no opportunity to develop, and there is the subsequent loss of whatever these relationships might come to mean. Second, the complement of these unusual working hours for the parent is a sleeping schedule which does not fit into the child's life. This may mean that the child cannot play at home, cannot bring other children home, or is constantly restrained and urged to be quiet until all spontaneity is squeezed out of his home life. Third, there are the lengthy absences from home, which in many ways affect the absent parent's relationship with the child and the other parent. Perhaps the primary result is that family life comes to be organized on the basis of the parent's absence. Such a child has, and yet does not have, a parent. This might be termed the problem of intermittent parenthood.

Special mention should be made here of those persons whose occupation or profession involves the care and problems of "other people's children." This group includes teachers, psychologists, pediatricians, social workers, etc. How do such parents react to their own children, when they find time for them? Do their occupations drain them dry of the energies which child rearing demands? Do they impose on their own children the hypotheses of their professional practices? Are they too preoccupied with the problems of their workaday children to concern themselves with those in their own homes? We are reminded here of the doctor's wife, cited by Boll,<sup>11</sup> who could get no help with her health problems until she set out to find a good doctor for herself. So weary of illness was her husband that he simply refused to face the possibility of it in his own family. Every complaint was pushed aside by, "You are just imagining it." And there is the university sophomore, the son of a famous surgeon, who had to arrange through his father's secretary for an appointment with his father.

Again, the occupational organization of an entire community may create a pattern of family life with its own distinctive problem of child development. Voss has shown this for the seashore resort family,<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Bossard and Boll, *op. cit.*, p. 199.

<sup>12</sup> J. Ellis Voss, *Ocean City: An Ecological Analysis of a Satellite Community*, University of Pennsylvania thesis, Philadelphia, 1941.

which is not that of the frolicking vacationists, but the one that remains behind when the gay folk have left.

The most striking characteristic of the seashore community, Ocean City, New Jersey, is its chameleon-like change. In the wintertime it is sparsely populated, with two dwellings to every individual. Its people are almost entirely family people. There is little of the bustle of work. Parents and children have time to be together and to share the communal activities. Suddenly, within a matter almost of days, a maelstrom of activity develops. For every room in Ocean City, there are now two people. Many of the year-round residents move out of their homes and rent them. Most of the others are crowded by boarders. Nearly 39 per cent of the Ocean City mothers are now employed outside of their homes, and in 90 per cent of the families both parents are employed in some way other than the care of their own immediate family. A complete change has taken place in the family set-up and does take place, thus, twice every year. This community "is neither urban nor rural but alternately takes on the nature of both."<sup>18</sup> Instead of being a happy medium between the two, this community offers to its families a winter of small-town family relationships and a summer of disorganization, during which the children are relatively free to care for themselves, in the time when festivity is at its height and their parents' work is at its greatest pressure. Crowded out at home, where discipline must be modified to the tastes of the guests, they have the run of the beaches and boardwalks, and the antics of the vacationists to watch and copy. Then, after this taste of freedom, school time comes again. The town quiets down with a great exodus of people, and the frolic is over. Parents now have the leisure winter months to concentrate upon the home, and to make up for the neglect of the summer.

4. Finally, there are the homes in which there is the physical intrusion of the family business or profession. These run a wide gamut—from the small shop which occupies the front room of the downstairs apartment, to the rectory to which everyone feels he has a right to come at any time, to the more imposing residence where the doctor's patients swarm over at least the first two floors.

Such situations have a wide variety of features which affect the social processes of child development. There may be a relative or complete lack of privacy, so that the whole family lives a gold-fish-bowl life. The demands of the office or shop may be such that one or more members of the family are always occupied, which means that the family seldom or never functions as a whole. Interruptions of family relations are constant. "I started a conversation with my husband on Tuesday," writes the wife of a doctor, "and we finished it on Friday." The children's problems and needs are particularly likely to be ignored

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 137-138.

under such circumstances. A fourteen-year-old boy, faced with a crisis situation in his life, tells of trying for eleven days to talk it over with his father, only to have the telephone ring, to have a patient call, or to be put off with "I can't talk to you now." There was the 22-year-old daughter of a widow realtor, whose office was in their home, who after two weeks despaired of an opportunity to tell her mother of her plans to marry, and resolved her difficulties by a forthright elopement. Nor is it only the actual demands of time and space that interfere; various young children with whom this has been discussed speak of their reluctance to begin a serious talk with their parents because of the constant imminence of interruption. The following case illustrates what life in the home of a busy physician may mean to the school progress of his son:

Paul was headed for medical school, following the family tradition. He had finished a high-grade preparatory boarding school in the second quintile of his class. He now returned to his home, attending the nearby college as a day student. His father was a general practitioner, with patients "swarming over the first two floors of the house." Twice a week, he performed tonsillectomies and various minor operations in his home. Most of the time two nurses lived in the large rambling house. Paul had his own room on the third floor, but the noise, excitement and general commotion constantly penetrated into his study. When at times the house quieted down, the very unnaturalness of it came to disturb him. At the end of the first term at college, he was conditioned in two subjects; at the end of the second term, he was dropped for scholastic cause. The father was keenly disappointed and blamed Paul for not applying himself. It was extremely difficult to convince the father to permit Paul, upon his subsequent re-admission, to live at the college, but he finally agreed. Paul's college record, from that time on, showed no further academic failure. He is very sure that being at home his first year was the cause of his difficulties, and the college personnel officer agrees with this.

#### THE IMPACT OF RESIDENTIAL MOBILITY

The term residential mobility is used here to mean changes in family location or residence. Such changes occur in some degree at all times and among all peoples; the American family is peculiar in the extent and intricacies of its mobility. A few statistical summaries will indicate the general proportions. Every year, before World War II, more than a million American farmers changed farms. More than four million persons migrated annually across state lines in pursuit of industrial employment. More than one-fifth of all native-born Ameri-

cans lived in states other than those in which they were born. Thompson's analysis of reciprocal population movements between city and country during the years 1920 to 1935 shows a total population change or turnover of 46,330,000.<sup>14</sup> Data from the federal Census Bureau show that in 1940 a total of 12 per cent of the population lived in counties other than those in which they lived on April 1, 1935.<sup>15</sup> With the advent of the war, the mobility of the population was greatly intensified, and current estimates are that more than thirty million Americans changed their residence during the war.

It is pertinent to this discussion to note the uneven distribution of residential mobility in ordinary times. In terms of regions, the census report on internal migration, just cited, shows that while those who changed residence in terms of counties during the period 1935-1940 constituted 12 per cent of the entire population, the figures were 7.4 for the northeastern states, 11.4 in the north central states, 12.8 in the south, and 22.7 for the west. Among rural families in Genesee County, New York, Anderson found in 1930 that of native-born Americans, 88 per cent of the husbands and wives in the 2500 families studied had been born in New York State, and of these, 91 per cent had been born in Genesee County.<sup>16</sup> By way of contrast, in Philadelphia in 1934, of all families living in rented homes (comprising 57.8 per cent of all families), 26.8 per cent had lived in the homes they occupied for less than two years, and only 40.3 per cent had occupied their homes for eight or more years.<sup>17</sup> Zorbaugh found a rooming-house district in Chicago in which the whole population turns over every four months, and Mowrer and Cowgill conclude that 35 and 32 per cent of the populations of Chicago and St. Louis, respectively, move at least once during a given year.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Warren S. Thompson, *Research Memorandum on Internal Migration in the Depression*, Publications of the Social Science Research Council, New York, 1937, pp. 19 ff.

<sup>15</sup> *Internal Migration, 1935-1940*, Government Printing Office, Washington, 1943.

<sup>16</sup> W. A. Anderson, *Mobility of Rural Families*, Cornell University Agricultural Experiment Station, Ithaca, 1934, pp. 29-30.

<sup>17</sup> *Report of Philadelphia Real Estate Survey*, Publications of The Pennsylvania State Emergency Relief Administration, Philadelphia Local Works Division, 1934, p. 4.

<sup>18</sup> Harvey W. Zorbaugh, *The Gold Coast and the Slum*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1929, p. 72; Ernest Mowrer, *The Family*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1932, p. 196, Donald Cowgill, *Residential Mobility of an Urban Population*, Washington University Library, St. Louis, 1935.

Residential mobility obviously has great meaning for family life. A change in residence for a family is like transplanting a tree or plant; for both plant and family it involves a separation from the matrix, a disturbance of the root system and consequently of the functioning of the organism, followed by the problems of adjusting to a new setting. In both cases, too, the specific consequences depend on various factors—the extent to which the plant or family has developed and spread out its root system, the skill with which the transfer is made, the similarity or dissimilarity of the new soil (in the case of the plant) or culture (for the family), and the frequency with which such transfers occur. The culture differential involved in residential mobility is of the highest importance; it is the key to the relative significance of such movements as those from one farm or one city street to another nearby, from one region to another, from farm or village to metropolitan center, and from one country to another.

For mobile families, the common problems may be summarized as follows: (1) maintenance of social participation in the new community, (2) continuance of subjection to community controls of behavior, (3) retention of social status, (4) readjustment of traditional attitudes toward the demands of new cultural situations, and (5) maintenance of family solidarity in the readjustment process. A large number of American families, with a history of repeated changes of residence, have not worked out the foregoing problems satisfactorily, and the existence of these problems and the resultant characteristics of such failure constitute one of the basic problems in contemporary society.

One additional effect of mobility upon the family which requires special comment is the inevitable separation of the immediate family from the larger kinship group. Much as one hears of the interference of in-laws, there is a reverse side to this. For many younger families in particular, the presence of kinsfolk nearby confers many beneficial advantages. In case of need, there is someone to advise, to aid, to comfort, to encourage, to admonish, or to restrain. The young couple from New Jersey who marry and move to Oregon a year later may glow with a sense of independence, but their background ledge in case of any disturbance in their pattern of life is narrow indeed.

### *Residential Mobility and Child Development.*

Turning to the role of residential mobility in the development of the child, one finds at least six aspects that seem of primary significance.

1. Change of residence breaks the continuity of life as expressed in the tangible tokens of family possession. This has its meaning for all the members of the family, but one who understands the concreteness of child thinking and feeling will quickly sense that the physical symbols of family unity and continuity mean more to him than to any but the very old members of the family. Adults are far too prone to overlook this fact, with glib references to the "adaptability of the child." The house and street where one lives are symbols, too, of stability. Their unchanging continuance simplifies life, and the child, especially when younger, is not fitted to grapple with complexity. Moreover, it is not simply the continuance of his routine but the child's conception of himself and his family and the integration of personality and situation which are involved in the persistence or non-persistence of these symbols. These, to be sure, are of the intangibles of life, but because they defy the naiveté of a statistical table, one must not underrate their importance.

2. Residential mobility generally means a change of school for the child. This is apt to precipitate many problems, considering for the moment only the scholastic aspects of the situation. Involved are adjustment problems to new courses, tasks, methods, and teachers. Some work may have to be repeated; in other cases subjects, either in whole or in part, will never be covered. In such subjects as mathematics and languages, this lack of sequence may be serious for the child's progress. A grade may be lost or gained, with varying consequences for his attitude toward his studies. His rank order in his class may be changed, upward or downward. Furthermore, many changes in school enrollment are made during, instead of at the beginning of, the year, and in such cases the danger is particularly great that the child's school work may be disturbed and tend to become fragmentary and disconnected.

3. The child neither lives nor studies in a vacuum. Change of residence means also change in friendships, social contacts, and social acceptances. First, there is the break with old friends. To try to hold on to them may impede the child's adjustment to new situations; to terminate the contact may constitute a real loss. "All my life," writes Sheila, who moved eight times with her family before she was seventeen, "I have felt emptiness because certain people I liked passed out of my life." These losses, comments a teacher of wide experience, seem less important for the younger child, but become increasingly serious after the eleventh or twelfth year.

Second, there is the immediate problem of social contacts and ac-

ceptance in the community and school system the child enters. For the boy, this may mean a series of fights to try out the newcomer, with the resultant assignment of status. For the girl, the struggle may be less physical but by no means less stark and cruel. The assignment of the newcomer to the proper pecking order is not confined to barnyard society. Here again one comes to appreciate the fact that the child from a small family who enters a large school system is in a far different position than the child of a century ago when conditions were reversed. Dr. Plant, who has called attention to the frequency with which mobile children come to the attention of the psychiatrist, describes the situation as follows:

As we see the situation in clinical practice, constant moving may affect the child in at least two ways. The demands of new adjustments are hard for many youngsters. Each one must find a new place for himself, must establish a new vantage-point of struggle for acceptance and importance, usually in a milieu in which the child culture pattern is already considerably crystallized. There is a difference between this moving and the placement of a child in camp or private school, where the child recognizes that a large share of the others are quite as new to the affair as is he. There is the added difficulty in our area that often the racial or cultural background of the immigrant family is not relished by its new neighbors. As a means of establishing the family, the child is exhorted at home to play with the neighboring children, who in turn show with a consistent and open cruelty that they do not care for the interloper. Caught between two fires the child finds his struggle to establish himself all the more intensified. We have seen evidences in children that one such change in address involves inadequacy (or inferiority) very much more than insecurity, but that repeated situations of this sort very definitely begin to give the picture of insecurity in the child.<sup>19</sup>

4. In this process of finding his social place in a new community, the problems of the mobile child must be considered against the background of his family. His family, too, is mobile. One result of this may be that the family can be of little or no help to the child. The parents do not "know the ropes," or "the right people." They may be pre-occupied with their own problems. The family may be mobile because the father is dead, or the parents quarrel or are shiftless or have separated or been divorced. The mobile child may have been shifted from the home of one relative to another, or from kinsfolk to institution

<sup>19</sup> James S. Plant, *Personality and the Cultural Pattern*, Commonwealth Fund, New York, 1937, p. 107.



and back again, or from one foster home to another. Human problems have a way of becoming interwoven in the fabric of family life.

Perhaps most significant for the mobile child is his family's status, or lack of it. A subsequent chapter dealing with school situations will discuss this more fully. To be emphasized here is the point brought out so well by Plant, that security and status for the child are to a great extent a family affair. Writing of the security aspect of this, Plant says:

The development of security is to a great extent a family affair—some sense of belongingness that the psycho-motor tensions of the parents transmit to the child. The resulting satisfaction is so basic a sentiment that it is only the most serious or prolonged series of threats that disturb it. The child who has not achieved this sense of security, the child who has not ever had a feeling that he has an unassailable place because of who he is regardless of what he is or what he does, shows a rather typical picture of anxiety and panic.<sup>20</sup>

One large-scale aspect of this family angle developed during the recent war. Written while the war was in progress, the following words are a fitting description:

Migrant war workers, or "defense workers" as they are generally called, have a rather distinctive status in the communities to which they have come. They tend to be spoken of as "those families who are here on defense jobs," with an implication that they are fly-by-night sort of folks. In many areas they are resented because they overtax living, schooling, and recreational facilities already strained. In other places they are crowded in trailer camps that may come to be regarded as a menace to the community. In some cities, like Detroit, they particularly accentuate housing conditions already quite bad. In other cases their status is complicated by the fact that they represent minority groups. Rather generally, older residents resent their use of community facilities to whose maintenance they have not contributed through taxation; they particularly resent their special privileges as defense workers in securing new automobiles and extra gasoline allotments. On the whole, and to a considerable extent, migrant war-working families live in war communities as strangers, objects of a rather pervasive social isolation.<sup>21</sup>

5. Residential mobility often involves a change from one cultural setting to another for the child and his family. The significance of this has been emphasized thus far chiefly in regard to migrations from Europe to America. However, with the increasing identification by

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 204.

<sup>21</sup> James H. S. Bossard, "Family Backgrounds of Wartime Adolescents," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, November, 1944, p. 41.

sociologists and anthropologists of, and emphasis upon, subcultural areas, it becomes evident that changes of residence within the United States, at times within the same state, may be a more radical procedure than has commonly been supposed. Certainly one would not depreciate the problems of a North Carolina Methodist farm boy who comes to live in an Irish Catholic urban area.

6. "Don't forget the cumulative aspect of this problem of moving from place to place," writes a young wife who herself moved more than a dozen times before graduation from high school.<sup>22</sup> The point is well taken. It is to be remembered that we have been considering not the effects of a change of residence, but of their recurrence. Whatever the meaning to the child of any particular change of residence, whatever the similarity or difference may be, the significant fact is that both these experiences and his definition of them accumulate. "There comes to be," writes the above young woman, "a vagueness about places where you have lived, of apartments and neighborhoods you didn't know well, or had come to dislike. Perhaps there were some you had liked. But after a time there comes to be an unreality about them, so that sometimes you are not quite sure whether this is something you have known in life or only in dreams." Obviously, the results of residential mobility are not all undesirable. Landis has pointed out general aspects of the reverse side.<sup>23</sup> The mobile child learns to be alert, adaptable, resourceful, democratic. Change of situation may stimulate to the point of becoming a pressure. "Mobility has its advantages," again to quote the case history just cited, "but I wouldn't wish them on anyone."

#### ECONOMIC PRESSURES

Most families are under economic pressure of one sort or another; we are concerned here with a degree of pressure which has a considerable meaning for child-family relationships. Such pressures are conceived here as being of two kinds: first, those which arise from economic inadequacy, and second, those deriving from sudden economic changes and dislocations

#### *Economic Inadequacy.*

The concept of economic inadequacy includes many different kinds of concrete situations—the inadequately financed home,<sup>24</sup> the mother-

<sup>22</sup> From the files of the William T. Carter Foundation.

<sup>23</sup> Paul Landis, "The Case for Mobility," *The Survey*, March, 1943, pp. 74-76.

<sup>24</sup> Bossard and Boll, *op. cit.*, pp. 185-188.

supported home,<sup>25</sup> the home with heavy drains upon its financial resources, the family with many young children, the family with unemployment,<sup>26</sup> the family on relief,<sup>27</sup> the white-collar poor, the improvident family, and the family whose spending routine is a complete pattern of unwise expenditures. It is well to warn the reader here against one of the common faults in so much of the recent socioeconomical writing, which assumes that economic inadequacy is wholly or primarily a matter of insufficient wages for industrial workers. Inadequate income does exist, but unwise outgo and general financial ineffectiveness are both prevalent and productive of similar results. Moreover, ineffective management of finances is not simply a factor, but also a symbol of various character traits of the parents.<sup>28</sup> Similarly, it should be recalled that economic inadequacy is a relative term, and as far as family planes of living are concerned it can be measured by the yardstick of ordinary working-class patterns (i.e., how one's friends and associates do live) and by the foot rule of need as established by scientific investigation (i.e., how scientists think they ought to live).

Many of the families revealing economic inadequacy have been discussed in the literature of recent years. One type is reserved for emphasis here, because of both its numerical importance and its relative neglect in our thinking and political maneuvering. This is the white-collar poor, a term used to denote the large group of clerical and professional workers whose incomes are fixed or change belatedly and in limited degrees. The "Trend of Earning Among White-Collar Workers During the War," a report prepared by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, placed the number of white-collar workers, as represented by clerical and professional employees, at about eleven million. A subcommittee of

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 194-197.

<sup>26</sup> Ernest W. Burgess, "Unemployment and the Family," *Marriage and Family Living*, Autumn, 1945, p. 87, also James H. S. Bossard, *Social Change and Social Problems*, Harper & Brothers, New York, rev. ed., 1938, chap. 12.

<sup>27</sup> Ruth S. Cavan and Katherine Ranck, *The Family and the Depression*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1938; Bessie H. McClenahan, "The Child of the Relief Agency," *Social Forces*, May, 1935, pp. 560-567, James H. S. Bossard (ed.), "Children in a Depression Decade," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, November, 1940; Horst Mendershausen, *Changes in Income Distribution During the Great Depression*, National Bureau of Economic Research, Inc., New York, 1946.

<sup>28</sup> Mrs. Eleanor S. Boll, the author's associate on the staff of the William T. Carter Foundation, suggests that nothing is perhaps more indicative of the personality organization than the handling of personal finances. This would seem to be a fruitful research lead, with significant ramifications in a number of directions.

the United States Senate, headed by Senator Elbert D. Thomas, estimated that more than twenty million Americans fall into this category.<sup>29</sup> Concerning the trend of earnings, the Bureau of Labor Statistics report stated: "Earnings of the approximately 11 million white-collar employees in the United States have increased since the war began decidedly less than those of factory and other industrial workers." Although their salaries have shown some increases, in some cases as high as 30 per cent, the hourly earnings of factory operators have risen by about 45 per cent since January, 1941, and their weekly earnings by almost 70 per cent.<sup>30</sup>

The particular wartime and postwar economic problems of these families arise chiefly from three factors. One is the increased cost of living. "The great majority of these workers," continues the federal report, "have always received modest incomes, and during the past few years they have felt the increased cost of living more keenly than the other major divisions of the labor force."<sup>31</sup> The extent of this increase, as measured by the Bureau of Labor Statistics index in retail prices for all living essentials from August, 1939, to March, 1946, was 32 per cent.<sup>32</sup>

Second has been the marked increase in the tax burden, especially in federal income taxes. This again falls most heavily on families with fixed incomes, for it means that this added burden must be absorbed out of customary resources. The difficulty that this presents for many families is emphasized in the studies made under the auspices of the Heller Committee at the University of California, which found that the white-collar group had an insufficient "slack" to avoid a deficit between their total wartime budget and their fixed income.<sup>33</sup>

Finally, there is the result of the recent changes in mortgage policies. In the period after the First World War, it became customary to consider mortgages of moderate size on homes as a relatively fixed charge. That is to say, mortgages of a reasonable size were not reduced but

<sup>29</sup> Elbert D. Thomas, "Twenty Million Forgotten Americans," *American Magazine*, May, 1944. For a brief summary, see *The Reader's Digest*, June, 1944, pp. 18-20.

<sup>30</sup> *Monthly Labor Review*, May, 1944, p. iv.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1033.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, June, 1946, p. 947.

<sup>33</sup> Ruth Okey and Mary G. Luck, *Wartime Food for Four Income Levels*, issued by the Heller Committee for Research in Social Economics, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1943.

were carried year after year with little change. Since that time, the policy of financing home purchases has changed so that few mortgages in recent years have been written without amortizing features. This has inaugurated a system of compulsory saving which, added to increased tax requirements and higher costs of living, is now proving to be a serious problem for family finance.

White-collar families respond to these economic pressures in either or both of two ways. One is additional effort, to increase the family income. This involves the acceptance of extra jobs, of added duty, and of overtime work, and the seeking of employment by additional members of the family, particularly the wife. The other device is economies in family expenditures, which shade from the elimination of non-essentials to a reduction in the family's plan of living. It is the common experience of mankind that in reduction of this type, children are likely to suffer somewhat disproportionately.

The effects of economic inadequacy, with particular reference to the physical appointments of family living, have been emphasized with considerable insistence in recent years, and many problems of child development go back to the lack of the necessary bases for normal family life. Chapter XIV offered many concrete illustrations of this fact.<sup>34</sup> On the other hand, perhaps less than sufficient attention has been paid to the effects of economic pressures of this kind upon the attitudes and conceptions of the child. The economic status of the family does much to influence the ideological development of its younger members. The child in a low-income home sees himself as such in comparison with other children and homes. Economic inadequacy expresses itself in concrete deficiencies whose values are largely social, i.e., comparative. Out of these comparisons grow the child's conceptions of himself and his attitude toward others, including his family. We are reminded here of Samuel Johnson's dictum, "Poor people's children never respect them."<sup>35</sup> Meltzer has thrown light in the same direction with his study of children's attitudes toward their parents, and his conclusion that children living at the lowest economic level had the least pleasantly toned attitudes toward their parents.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>34</sup> For a discussion of income as a factor in well-being, consult Bossard, *Social Change and Social Problems*, chap. 8.

<sup>35</sup> Joseph Wood Krutch, *Samuel Johnson*, Henry Holt & Company, Inc., New York, 1944, p. 4.

<sup>36</sup> H. Meltzer, "Economic Security and Children's Attitudes to Parents," *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, October, 1936, pp. 590-608.

*Economic Changes.*

It has long been the contention of economists that there is no particular merit or demerit in either high or low prices, but that the change from one price level to another always involves serious consequences. Much the same can be said about the economic status of the family; sudden changes are highly significant, and in proportion to the extent and speed of their occurrence. Here the suddenly wealthy family is one with the suddenly poor. Both types of change have been the fate of a relatively large number of American families. One of the results of the churning waves of social change that have surged back and forth over this country during its history is the sudden rise and fall in economic status of individual families. The fortune-making periods of American history in particular furnish their full quota of this kind of family. The history of the immigrant stream is replete with illustrations, particularly of families by whom the path from Old World peasant status to urban mansion has been traversed in a relatively few years. In more recent years, the sequence of two World Wars and a world-wide depression has continued these rapid turns of the economical wheel.<sup>87</sup>

The two recent large-scale changes in the economic status of American families will be summarized briefly. First, during the depression of the 1930's, many families experienced sudden and marked reductions in economic status. The extent to which this happened is shown in a study made by the United States Public Health Service and the Division of Research of the Millbank Memorial Fund, among about 12,000 families in ten cities.<sup>88</sup> The families were classed, on the basis of income, into three groups: (1) the "poor," having incomes under \$150 per capita per year; (2) the "moderate," with incomes per capita of from \$150 to \$424; and (3) the "comfortable," with incomes of \$425 or more per capita. The changes in the distribution of these families, by percentages, are shown in Table 5.

In other words, on the basis of this study, only about one-fourth of the families who were "comfortable" in 1929 remained so in 1932, and nearly an equal number had become "poor." More than half of the

<sup>87</sup> For a convincing study, in novel form, of the adverse effects of a sudden change of fortune upon a family, the reader is referred to William Dean Howells, *A Hazard of New Fortunes*, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1889.

<sup>88</sup> From the summary in *Monthly Labor Review*, January, 1934, pp. 83-84.

"moderate" class had fallen into the "poor" class. Also, about 9 out of 10 of the poor remained poor.

The other manifestation of large-scale economic change can be found in the "war rich" of World War II. From December, 1941, to the end of June, 1944, about 200 billion dollars was earmarked by the American government for expenditure for war purposes. In addition to

TABLE 5. Distribution of Surveyed Population According to Annual Family Income per Capita

|             | 1929 | 1930 | 1931 | 1932 |
|-------------|------|------|------|------|
| Poor        | 10.3 | 19.2 | 29.0 | 45.1 |
| Moderate    | 42.6 | 46.3 | 47.1 | 41.6 |
| Comfortable | 47.1 | 34.5 | 23.9 | 13.3 |

the compensation of those in military service, these expenditures were translated into terms of employment, wages, profits, occupational changes, price increases, and so forth, which combined to affect, directly and in an economic way, millions of American families. Breaking down this increase into its component parts, Frederick L. Allen concluded that the major share of this war prosperity went into the pockets of a wage-earning family "that was making something like two thousand dollars a year before Pearl Harbor and now (1944) is making something like three or four thousand."<sup>39</sup> To many families this economic windfall came after a decade of depression; to others, it came to lighten an anxiety over finances which had been chronic or intermittent for a decade. To put the matter bluntly, much of the new "war money" went to families who had not had very much before. Some of these, sobered by their past experience, used this new money carefully, as data on savings and the purchase of government bonds clearly indicate; others indulged in an orgy of spending, much of it unwisely. For families that have grown up during the depression, there seems to have been a good deal of temptation to indulge in a sort of last "middle-age fling" before the next stage of maturity overtook them.

#### "SO LITTLE TIME"<sup>40</sup>

There is a dimension of family life which has to do with the time and energy, nervous and physical, that the maintenance of satisfactory fam-

<sup>39</sup> Frederick L. Allen, "Who's Getting the Money?" *Harper's Magazine*, June, 1944, pp. 3-4.

<sup>40</sup> Marquand, *op. cit.*

ily relations requires. Students of the family tend quite generally to ignore this dimension, although its basic importance is obvious. It is a particularly necessary requisite today for wise and effective parenthood because of the nature of child rearing in our contemporary culture. Not only is our culture, especially our urban culture, a highly complicated one, presenting many opportunities and problems to the child, but the role of parenthood has changed with the development of numerous specialized child-serving agencies and institutions. Confronted with the realities of the present child culture, the parent is cast more and more into an administrative role in which he becomes adviser, assessor, interpreter, and selector of the child's experiences and opportunities. Elsewhere, in analyzing the changing protective functions of the modern family, it has been pointed out that "instead of the overt dangers of two centuries ago, those of our contemporary society are more subtle and insidious, and thus inevitably call for new protective methods. Now, instead of physical force, there is needed keen judgment; instead of brute strength, there must be wise counsel; instead of regulation, the demand is for instruction; and suggestion must replace compulsion."<sup>41</sup>

In other words, the contention here is that parenthood in the modern family, calling for the tactful management of the children in relation to the diverse opportunities and range of contacts of all kinds now open to them, needs considerable time and energy if it is to function effectively; for these are tasks which require investigation, analysis, judgment, planning, decision—and none of them can be hurried or performed effectively with tired nerves.

It would be an avoidance of reality to overlook the many aspects of contemporary life which tend to reduce the time-energy dimensions of parenthood below the normal requirement. Moreover, it is in the upper social, economic, and often educational brackets that one must begin the identification of these aspects. William Healy, philosophizing after a lifetime of studying child behavior problems, points out how the pressure of business and of social affairs greatly outweighs concern about structuring the personalities of children. "As I interview parents," he writes, "I find that comparatively few of those who are on the quick upgrade financially are in any measure alive to what they may be doing to their children."<sup>42</sup> Nor are the fathers who are putting themselves

<sup>41</sup> Bossard, *Social Change and Social Problems*, p. 609.

<sup>42</sup> William Healy, *Personality in Formation and Action*, W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., New York, 1938, p. 145.



under pressure to amass a fortune or to attain professional or political leadership the sole offenders in this respect. In many such families, the mothers, seeking to complement the ambitious design for the family, devote their time and energy to projects of public service or social prestige or even child welfare, all the time neglecting their own maternal responsibilities and permitting their children to run wild or handing them over to the care of domestic servants, at times not of a high order.

The war period witnessed the development of many aspects of life which made serious inroads upon the time and energy of parents. For millions of mothers, housekeeping has become a far more exacting task. Rationing, shortages requiring shopping at several stores or on successive days, long lines in stores because of shortage of help, curtailment of delivery services—all these and other wartime developments have increased not only the time but also the nervous energy involved in what is considered routine housework. Lack of servants has thrown homemaking duties on members of the family not accustomed to, and perhaps not qualified for, such tasks. Community and civic groups related to war work made additional demands of all kinds. Many fathers and mothers have taken on additional jobs in order to meet the rising tide of taxes and living costs. Many of these conditions have continued in the postwar period.

#### DISGRACED FAMILIES: THE STRESS OF SHAME

The role of shame in human relationships is far more important than contemporary students have recognized. Both the psychology and the sociology of shame have yet to be written. Its significance in the development of the child, especially in the adolescent stage, is particularly great. The disgraced family, to employ the phrase utilized by Boll,<sup>43</sup> must be given major emphasis, therefore, in any consideration of families under stress.

A disgraced family is one which experiences a decline of status because of an adverse attitude on the part of the community toward the behavior of some one or more of its members. Since these attitudes involve the mores of the specific group which reacts to this behavior, it follows that the type of behavior condemned, and the degree of social disapproval expressed, vary a good deal from one social class to another, as well as from region to region. However, for purposes of general dis-

<sup>43</sup> Bossard and Boll, *op. cit.*, p. 202.

cussion, the following types of behavior commonly tend to affect unfavorably the social status of families: crime, especially major penal offenses; imprisonment; illegitimacy; drug addiction; chronic drunkenness; mental illness, and suicide. The number of families thus affected is large, as any inclusive index of these forms of behavior would show. Moreover, one must think in terms of the proportion of families which go through such experiences, not merely the number to be found at any one moment. Human problems are cumulative, not merely cross sectional.

Many factors determine the meaning of family disgrace for child development. First, there is the family's definition of its own behavior. Data on the family backgrounds of delinquent children show that a large proportion come from homes in which criminal behavior is a more or less accepted pattern.<sup>44</sup> Often, too, families of this kind tend to live near each other, so the neighborhood pattern may coincide with that of the family. This means that neither in the family nor in the neighborhood is there any critical sensitivity to a criminal record. "Marie is such a good girl," her mother tells the probation officer; "she always brings home everything she steals." Second, there is the degree of unity and emotional interdependence which exists between family members, particularly the degree of attachment between parents and children.<sup>45</sup> Third, loss of status resulting from family disgrace becomes more serious as one moves upward in the social scale—"the higher they come, the harder they fall." Fourth, the size and anonymity of the community are significant. Family disgrace in a stable, rural, primary-group community tends to be much more serious than in a mobile, urban, secondary-group area. Fifth, the age of the child is important. Family status means more in the adolescent than in any other age span.

Obviously, disgraced families and their significance for the child are a highly individual matter, but again certain common aspects may be identified. First, one would expect a loss of self-assurance, both for the child and for the other members of the family. Status is inextricably associated with self-confidence and self-respect, so the loss of the former cannot but involve modifications of the latter. As time goes on, accompanying feelings ranging from vague frustration to bitter resentment

<sup>44</sup> Edwin H. Sutherland, *Principles of Criminology*, J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia, 1939, chap. 9.

<sup>45</sup> Burgess and Locke, *op. cit.*, p. 601.

may develop. At an early age, the child of normal insight cannot help sensing that he is paying the price for the misdeeds of others. Second is an inevitable preoccupation with one's problems. For the child this may range from mere abstraction to worry, to obsessive reveries. One result of this in turn may be a lack of social or scholastic effectiveness, which brings further problems and complications in its wake. Parents and other older members of the family, too, are likely to be preoccupied, so they fail the child at a time when he most needs reliance on their comfort and help. Third is the effect upon relationships within the family. These may take several different forms. There is, for example, the situation in which the members form a conspiracy to conceal the family skeleton, trying to hide the act, the offender, or the knowledge of what has occurred. Or the situation may resolve itself into a conflict between the erring one and the rest of the family, with the possibility of all kinds of complications. Also present frequently may be feelings of sorrow. These prevail most often in families with strong affectional ties. Foremost in its meaning for the child in such cases might be the disappointment in the parent, the feeling of disillusionment that comes with the shattering of the childhood ideal of the parent or other offending kin.

Perhaps the most generally observed consequence of family disgrace is the social isolation of the family. Such isolation often is self-imposed. The child or the entire family may withdraw from normal contacts. There is a conscious effort to avoid former associates and friends. A great variety of avoidance techniques are developed to meet such situations. Or the isolation may be imposed by the group. Particularly does this happen in the case of children. The child from the disgraced family may be avoided, or snubbed by friends, or dropped by the clique, or disbarred from the playground. Such isolation may take a positive form or the negativism of the silent treatment. Anyone who observes juvenile behavior cannot but see that children often are very cruel to each other, especially at a time in life when the wish for social recognition is very strong. Frequently, the isolation is imposed upon the child before he is of an age to have developed the spiritual resources which could enable him to cope with such situations.

Complementary to this isolation from the group, there often develops the tendency to form new social contacts at a lower status level. Actually this is a ready adjustment to an existing situation. Since the community has changed the person's status, the thing to do is to form

compensatory contacts at a lower level. How this may set up a chain of circumstances which extend over a long period of time is illustrated in the following case document:

Richard was a senior in college when his father for the third time brought disgrace upon his family, only this time the precipitating behavior was more reprehensible than on the former occasions. Richard had fought to retain his individual status, following his father's earlier episodes, and through the help of stalwart friends, had succeeded in large measure in doing so. The third blow, coming after years of a determined effort to "keep his chin up," apparently broke Richard's spirit. Although his college clique had had upper social class status, soon after leaving college he began to go around with girls from the "other side of the railroad tracks." According to his own statement, he had developed the fixed idea that no "nice" girl would marry him because of his father, and that if he wished to marry, he must find his mate on a social level so low that she and her family would not object to his father. Some time later, he settled down to a girl of upper lower class status, and relatively soon, sex relations between them became a part of the courtship routine. After an engagement extending over a year and a half, they were married. During this entire period, Richard was in a state of constant inner conflict. He avoided his earlier upper class contacts. His attitude toward his fiancée alternated between an awareness of her social shortcomings and his relative satisfaction with her as a sexual mate, with a strong overtone of his duty to her because of the relationship which had developed between them. Although a virile physical type, he fainted four times during the two-week period before his marriage. Furthermore, he stated that he did not sleep a wink for forty-eight hours before the ceremony. The marriage lasted four years, during which time two children were born. Divorce ultimately loosened the bond, but the inner conflict was not resolved until some fifteen years later. The psychological scars of the experience still remain, of course, and Richard is quietly but consistently bitter toward his father. He says that his father has ruined his life and that of his two children.

Unfortunately, the element of disgrace does not operate alone as a rule. Most often disgrace is an expression, in "the public relations" of the family, of a whole complex of disorganizing circumstances. Consider the obvious case of the imprisonment of a parent. In addition to the stress of shame, the results commonly found include dependence upon relatives or social agencies for support; the separation of children from their mothers or from brothers and sisters; the employment of the mother; the employment of the children; the interruption of the children's schooling; the loss of property through forced sales or the in-

ability to continue payments; and the mother's assumption of illegal relationships.<sup>46</sup>

Another illustrative study is that by Treudley, showing how mental illness interferes with family routines.<sup>47</sup> In addition to withdrawal from social participation because of feelings of shame, the following additional complications may arise: (1) The family income and plane of living may be lowered. (2) Different members of the family adjust or react differently to the arrangements necessitated by the illness. (3) The mentally ill member projects his discomfort, illness, or complaint on the rest of the household. (4) The public peace of the neighborhood may be disturbed by the ill person. (5) If the mother is ill, the management of the appearance and functions of the home may deteriorate. (6) Eating and other dining-room routines are broken or upset, with subsequent effects upon the digestion of the children. (7) There is unpredictability of household routines. Meals are served at irregular times, for example. (8) Tensions develop between family members over these irregularities. (9) The mentally ill person becomes notional about food, clothing, bed, etc. (10) The mentally ill individual may become sadistic, deliberately seeking to destroy the family pleasure. (11) The sleep of the members of the family is broken. (12) The children are not disciplined or supervised. (13) There is no cooperation between home and school. The children may miss school, be late, or be unable to study. (14) The children's play life and other forms of spontaneity may be interfered with seriously. (15) The pet notions, aversions, prejudices, etc., of the mentally ill member may interfere with the normal lives, friendships, and activities of the children. (16) Feelings of nervous strain are inevitable. (17) The behavior of the mentally ill member either is not predictable or is unpleasantly predictable.

#### TWO FUNCTIONS OF THE HOME

The more one studies the problems of children in families under stress, the more one comes to consider and evaluate the child's home from two different but complementary points of view: First, the home is the place from which the child goes to participate in the larger social life; and, second, it is the place to which he returns after this social ex-

<sup>46</sup> Ruth Bloodgood, *Welfare of Prisoners' Families in Kentucky*, U. S. Children's Bureau Publication No. 182, 1928, p. 21.

<sup>47</sup> Mary B. Treudley, "Mental Illness and Family Routines," *Mental Hygiene*, April, 1946, pp. 235-249.

perience. This suggests the basic importance of two functions of the family in the child's development: the family's role, first, as a status-defining agency, and second, as an experience-defining agency. It seems appropriate to conclude the part of this volume devoted to the analysis of family situations in child development with a brief consideration of these two functions.

### *The Home as a Status-Defining Agency.*

When the child begins making social contacts outside his family, he is identified at first largely in terms of the home from which he comes and to which he brings his friends. The home serves therefore as a very important factor in the process of his social identification and the ascription of his status. This factor operates in the social development of all children, and at all social levels; but it is particularly important for girls, for they must operate, socially speaking, more in terms of the home basis than must boys. This is especially true during the adolescent stage, when the drive for social recognition is strongest.

Once the universality of the foregoing process is recognized, one is in a position to understand a number of things about child behavior. It explains, for example, that oft-noted critical attitude which adolescents, particularly adolescent girls, manifest toward their parents—their efforts to "bring up father," to make over the family and the home. Similarly, too, it enables one to assess the stresses and strains of family life which have been described in the preceding pages. The essential tragedy of so many of the young people in these homes is that their families are a social handicap, or are believed to be so, during those years when the children's chief interest is their social acceptance outside the home. It is our considered judgment that the behavior problems of many adolescents should be reinterpreted and restudied as attempts to work out an adjustment to the social isolation or discrimination which they experience because of their family origins. This would be particularly true, and keen, in a country with traditions of social democracy and with a large population of recent immigrant origin. More will be said about this in a later chapter.

### *The Home as an Experience-Defining Agency.*

Complementary to the role of the family as a status-defining agency is its function in defining the experiences of its members. Much has been written recently of the importance of the home as a cushioned

retreat for husband and wife; obviously the larger aspects of such use have great meaning in child development. Home is the place the child comes back to, with his experiences. It is the lair to which he retreats to lick his wounds; the stage to which he returns to parade the glory of his achievements; the refuge he finds in which to brood over his ill treatment, real and fancied. Home, in other words, is the place to which one brings the everyday run of social experiences, to sift, to evaluate, to appraise, to understand, or to be twisted, to fester, to be magnified, or ignored, as the case may be. Here again one sees a universal process in child development, with families under stress often scoring their most signal failures in this respect. Such families are families in which the parents are preoccupied with problems other than those arising in the social development of their children. From this it follows that parental failures in these families most often take the form of "sins of omission." Child rearing, let it be emphasized again, is for the parents a teaching process, and teachers under stress do not make good teachers.

#### SUMMARY

1. Family situations cannot be considered without reference to the impact of external forces. In many families, problems of internal relations result from the stress of outside influences.

2. The physical setting of family life affects its functioning processes. Many families live under the stress of housing inadequacies, which often bear with particular heaviness upon the life of the child. Postwar housing shortages, trailer camps, and hotel life represent special aspects of this problem.

3. The stress of occupational requirements often interferes with the child-rearing process. Fathers are increasingly away from home. More and more mothers are gainfully employed outside the home. Certain occupations involving irregular or lengthy absences from home may be particularly detrimental. Often, too, a business or profession intrudes upon home life.

4. Residential mobility affects the child in many ways. It breaks the continuity of life; and involves a change of school, adjustment to new social contacts, lessened family help and guidance, and, at times, marked changes in cultural contacts.

5. Economic pressures on family life include both economic inadequacy and the impact of sudden changes and dislocations.

6. Satisfactory parent-child relationships require adequate time and energy. Many families, especially at the upper economic and social levels, are under stresses which result in inadequacies in this respect.

7. The role of shame is very important in child development. Disgraced families are a serious handicap to their child members, particularly in their social contacts. Outstanding illustrations of such families are those in which imprisonment, illegitimacy, drug addiction, chronic drunkenness, etc., occur.

8. The problems of children in families under stress must be considered in the light of two basic functions of the home for the child: (a) the home as a status-defining agency, and (b) the home as an experience-defining agency.



## Part VI:

### Child Development and Non-Family Groups



## Growing Out of the Family



Personality is a product of slow and gradual growth. Students of child behavior who analyze the emergence and early growth of behavior patterns place great emphasis upon the concept of development. This concept has been elaborated in particular by students of the physical and mental aspects of child life, and its philosophy has been made the lodestone of their constructive efforts. "Child guidance is growth guidance," write Gesell and his collaborators. "The refinements of the psychological care of normal and deviate child alike depend upon a developmental philosophy. A genetic approach is more important than rule of thumb and clever modes of discipline. A developmental outlook permits us to see the total tide of development in perspective. This gives a constructive forward reference to our methods and a more tolerant understanding of the difficulties of immaturity."<sup>1</sup>

Similar emphases appear today in the studies of the social behavior of the child. From the moment that life begins, the child is a social being. Even before birth, he has a profound effect upon those about him. At first, his role in social relationships is rather passive; but with continued growth, his responses become more active and aggressive. From one point of view, these changes in behavior involve his individualization, i.e., his emergence as an independent and relatively self-sufficient person; from the other, this is merely the story of his socialization, of his integration into group life and his acquisition of values which have a social orientation.<sup>2</sup>

This chapter is concerned with certain situational changes which underlie this process of the child's socialization, involving principally his growth beyond the world of his family into that of the larger society.

<sup>1</sup> Arnold Gesell, Frances L. Ilg, and others, *Infant and Child in the Culture of Today*, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1943, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Arthur T. Jersild, *Child Psychology*, Prentice-Hall, Inc., New York, rev. ed., 1942 pp. 156-157.

The main emphases, following reference to selected aspects of these situational changes, will be upon the problems which they tend to create for the child and his family.

#### THE SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDHOOD

Obviously, the child's first social world is that of his family. In it the biological tasks of birth, protection, and feeding take place; within it develop those first and intimate associations with persons of different ages and sexes which form the basis of his personality development; from it are learned the manifold items which constitute its culture. It is a world in itself, in which the child learns to live, to move, and to have his being; and for a number of years his immaturity keeps him within the limits of its confines.

Early in life, however, the child begins to make forays into the other world outside. Gesell fixes the age for this at 18 months. "When a child reaches the age of 18 months, his behavior extends beyond the confines of his home. He goes abroad. He may attend a nursery school. His behavior has an enlarged cultural significance."<sup>3</sup> Certainly by the age of two, instances of cooperative give-and-take, even if only of short duration, begin to appear. From this time on, response to the demands of other children and interest in the social world outside the family progress at a continuous even if irregular rate. Psychologists, observing manifestations of child behavior from year to year, tend to identify a sequence of relatively well-defined stages in this process of social development.<sup>4</sup> Five such stages will be identified briefly.

#### *Five Stages of Childhood.*

1. First is the period of infancy, extending from birth to about the end of the second year. This is the period of the beginnings of social behavior: the child learns to distinguish between persons and objects; shows selective attention to the human face, recognizing familiar persons; attempts speech; shows reactions to persons of the same age; imitates those about him; and manifests some degree of rivalry in play with other children.

<sup>3</sup> Gesell, Ilg, and others, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

<sup>4</sup> For a good brief summary, the reader is referred to Elizabeth B. Hurlock, *Child Development*, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., New York, 1942, chap. 9; Gesell, Ilg, and others, *op. cit.*; and Arnold Gesell and Frances L. Ilg, *The Child from Five to Ten*, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1946.

2. Second are the years from two to six, usually referred to as the preschool years, and sometimes as the pregang stage. During these years children progress from being relatively non-social to being distinctly socialized. Among observable changes are an increase in the size of the cooperating group, in the length of duration of cooperative activity, in capacity to identify oneself with a club or team, in ability to follow the complex rules of a game, in perception of social relationships, in awareness of status compared with that of others, in capacity for self-criticism with reference to the standards set by others, and in capacity to formulate in words the traits and characteristics of others which they like and dislike.

3. Third is the gang period or stage, which begins at about the age of six, when most children enter school; it extends to about the twelfth year. During these years the child shifts his interests more and more from the social world of his family to the group life of his peers. Social consciousness develops rapidly, the chief interest is in group activities, group loyalty becomes highly important, sportsmanship is emphasized, there is growing susceptibility to social approval and disapproval, social discrimination begins to make its appearance, and there is a growing revolt against adult domination. Significant differences in these respects between boys and girls appear now, as a result chiefly of cultural determinants.

4. Just before the onset of puberty, from eleven to thirteen in girls and from thirteen to fifteen in boys, the child passes through a stage which has aptly been called the negative phase.<sup>5</sup> Among its characteristics are various manifestations of anti-social behavior, with a definite backward trend in social adjustments. There is a critical attitude toward home, parents, society, etc., coupled with a desire to withdraw from former friends and associates. Fortunately this phase is of short duration.

5. With puberty comes the beginning of adolescence. This stage customarily extends from the twelfth to the twentieth year. It is the transition stage from childhood to maturity, during which new patterns of behavior have to develop to meet the demands both of the larger and more diversified life of his peers, and of the adult society which he begins to enter. More will be said later about this stage.

<sup>5</sup> Charlotte Buhler, *From Birth to Maturity*, Kegan Paul, London, 1935.

*The Social Crisis of Childhood.*

Obviously, there is a considerable variation from one child to another, not only as to the age when these successive stages occur, but also in the exact nature of their manifestations. Throughout this entire process of development, two changes continue to take place. First, the child spends less and less time with his family and derives less enjoyment from their company; and second, there is a corresponding increase in his association with children of his own age. At first, the separations from his family are relatively brief and incidental—short trips or excursions, like fledglings darting from the nest to a nearby branch and then hopping back to the protective nest again. But as time goes on, these separations increase not only in frequency and length of time, but also in their psychosocial implications. What comes basically to be involved is a shift in the center of the child's social orientation from his family to his peer group. Gradually and imperceptibly his loyalties to and his interests in his peer group grow until they equal, and finally tend to surpass, those he has for his family. To speak in situational terms, this transfer is a major social process in child development, precipitating what is for many persons life's first major social crisis. What actually happens during these years is that the child continues to live in the social world of his family, to whose requirements he must submit himself, while he is busy transferring his activities and allegiances to the social world of his peers, whose approvals and disapprovals come to have paramount importance for him. It is to the phases, factors, and problems associated with this process that we turn next.

## TOWARD THE PEERAGE OF ONE'S AGE

The transfer from the social world of one's family to that of one's peers in childhood has been identified as a social process extending over a period of years. Although it begins very early in life in the form of casual excursions from the family fold, it is when the child starts attending school regularly that the process gets fully under way.

Going to school involves for the child a revolution in his situational setting. First, familiar objects and places are left behind. The child enters a new physical environment, different from his home. This difference may be quite pronounced, in the direction of either increased comfort and attractiveness or the reverse. Second, the population of this new world is much larger than that of his home. Perhaps the number is very large. Accordingly, freedom has to be curtailed. Contacts are

multiplied, there are more rivals, more adjustments to other persons are necessary. This competition with other children takes one form in the school room, another on the school playground, and often still another on the way to and from school. There are children who have to fight their way to school and back home again. Third, a new authority emerges in the child's life—that of the teacher, who now takes the place of the parent and in certain respects seems to supersede the parent. Furthermore, new responses to this person of authority are necessary. Instead of the shared intimacy with the parental authority, there is the more impersonal, oftentimes entirely impersonal, authority of the teacher. Truly, for the child this is a new world, with new criteria, new rules, new requirements. Viewed from his standpoint, the change must be revolutionary, and one cannot but speculate about its crucial meaning for the child and about two further questions involving social policy. First, how early in life may children be submitted safely to such a revolutionary transfer of social worlds; and second, what other obligations are more important than the mother's presence in the home in helping the child assimilate this experience?

### *Some Problem Aspects of the Transfer.*

Entrance into the school-peer-group world creates two sets of problems for the child: first, he has to learn to live in this new world; and second, he must learn to live in two worlds, for he continues also to live in his family world. In this continuing transfer from one world to another, many difficulties arise, some of which are selected for brief analysis. Throughout this entire discussion of the transfer process, its problems, and the child's responses to them, the children discussed are primarily below the age of twelve.

1. First is the passage from protected to unprotected competition. This constitutes in large measure the early socialization of the child. Children gathered together in school or other groups in the earliest years come mostly from homes in which they have enjoyed protected competition, i.e., in which situations have been devised and manipulated to show them off, to let them win, etc. When such children gather in groups, their first reaction is to play by themselves, without much reference to the presence of others, and to deal with each other only when conflicts arise. Subsequently, playing with each other begins, on the basis of unprotected or free competition. This is a most significant situational change that opens up an entirely new world,

in which the child must gain status without benefit of adult manipulations. Parents and other adults are prone to encourage child competition during this period, and in a form more stark and unrestricted than they employ in their adult relations. Viewed through the eyes of the child, this is a hard world, in which the contestants often are extremely cruel to each other.

2. A second set of problems involves the child's experience with patterns of response to his peers and to other persons as well. In the family world, he sees and learns to use certain ways of approaching people and responding to them. These may be patterns of friendliness, resentment, rebellion, submission, excessive volubility, or sullen silence. "The examples set for the child by his parents, older persons and associates operate from birth onward," writes Anderson. "Older persons transmit a variety of techniques and attitudes. . . . Thus the child observes his parents greeting neighbors or friends, hears the comments made by his parents on individuals, organizations, and activities, and is given examples of either good or poor sportsmanship when he plays with his parents. . . . If parents quarrel frequently in the presence of the child, he not only acquires quarreling as a mode of approach to others but may react with uneasiness and frustration."<sup>6</sup>

Much of the child's early socialization is a trying-out of these techniques or modes of approach. However they work at home, the peer world renders its own verdict. Some elicit favorable, others unfavorable, reactions. "A boy sent to a clinic because of his unpopularity was socially isolated among his fellows because of his many caustic comments and criticisms. It was found that his father was known throughout his community for similar behavior. Here what seemed abnormal in the boy had been learned in the normal manner directly from a parent."<sup>7</sup> On the basis of this experience with the peer group, there goes on in the child a continuous selection and valuation of responses, with a continuance of some and a modification or elimination of others.

Children differ markedly in the opportunities which they have to gain social experience of this kind. Some children have contacts during these early years with many other children, both at home and in peer groups outside the home. The ages of the children in these peer groups may be the appropriate ones to stimulate the socializing process. On

<sup>6</sup> John E. Anderson, "The Development of Social Behavior," *American Journal of Sociology*, May, 1939, p. 849.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 849.



the other hand, there are children who are the only children in the family group and who have very limited contacts, over a period of years, with other children of their own age. Parents often fail to consider situations of this kind in selecting the home and neighborhood in which they live, yet they are of basic importance in the child's social development. Washburn and Hilgard have shown that the persistence of poor social techniques in many children is due to inexperience rather than to inability to acquire the techniques if appropriate experiences are given.<sup>8</sup> Updegraff and Herbst have found that social behavior varies with the type of play equipment;<sup>9</sup> and Cockrell found that an environment rich in play materials produced the most social contacts and those of the highest order. Where little or no equipment was available, undesirable social behavior seemed to result.<sup>10</sup>

In the course of this learning process, many a child comes to discover that there is a fundamental difference between the response patterns emphasized to him in the family world and those prescribed for him in the peer world. In the former, he is told by parents and teachers, and is shown by the examples of other children, to be obedient and submissive. He is to accept leadership and direction. Mother knows best, and it is not for him to question. But in the peer world the prescribed responses are apt to be those of self-assertion. There the chief virtue is domination; the most important qualities are those of leadership. In fact, there is much evidence to show that the more dominating the parent is in his relations with his child and the more submissive he expects the child to be toward him, the more self-assertive he wants the child to be in his relations with other children.

3. A third group of problems for children arises from the differences between the culture of the family and that of the peer world. Such differences are very prevalent, and at times quite marked, in a country like ours, with its rich variety of cultural groups, its sectional traditions, its regional differences, and its class distinctions. Furthermore, the high rate of residential mobility of our population, with its changing con-

<sup>8</sup> Ruth W. Washburn and Josephine R. Hilgard, "A Quantitative Clinical Method of Recording the Social Behavior of Young Children," *Journal of Genetic Psychology*, December, 1934, pp. 390-405.

<sup>9</sup> Ruth Updegraff and Esther K. Herbst, "An Experimental Study of the Social Behavior Stimulated in Young Children by Certain Play Materials," 1933, *ibid.*, pp. 372-391.

<sup>10</sup> D. L. Cockrell, "A Study of the Play of Children of Preschool Age by an Unobserved Observer," *Genetic Psychological Monographs*, December, 1935, pp. 377-469.

tacts, increases the incidence of contacts between cultural groups. Thus the North Carolina small-town Protestant family comes to live among the Irish Catholic in Boston; the Polish Catholic family migrates to a Protestant German area; the Vermont couple, with their seven-year-old son, are transferred to a job in Georgia; the intellectually overstimulated son of a university professor lives on the edge of a changing urban neighborhood that is rapidly being taken over by Negroes; the child of wealthy parents, keenly alive to the social amenities, finds his peer contacts with a host of upper lower and lower middle-class children whose interests are for the most part considerably different from his own.

If we remember that the term culture includes ways of thinking and believing as well as material artifacts, the significance of cultural differences between family and peer worlds will be evident. From the family standpoint, the culturally different peer world stands for habits, ideas, and values which the family seeks to avoid in rearing its child; to the peers, the child's family appears as peculiar, old-fashioned, or unreasonable. From the standpoint of the child, the situation is both difficult and confusing. In his home world he is being trained, to the point of coercion perhaps, to certain cultural values, and his peers in the child world emphasize another set; he must live in both worlds, and at a time when he lacks insight into the peculiarities of life, his parents, and his peers. Sometimes these cultural differences are minor, and cause only a passing wonder in his mind; in other cases, they are broad or deep, or both, resulting in the direct conflicts between the two worlds in which he must live. This is perhaps the place to point out the possible role of the private school, if properly selected, in bringing children of relatively similar cultural backgrounds together.

4. A fourth group of problems has to do with the reactions of the parents to this early socializing process of the child. Of the more commonly found parental attitudes, four, which tend to hamper the child's social development, will be identified briefly. There are the parents, for example, who brook no competition. They tend to ignore or to reject the claims of the child or his peer world. They fail to realize its meaning to him or its role in his development. Second, there are the parents who seek to lure their child away from contacts with other children and try to restrict him to contacts within the family. "We and our children do everything together," say many parents with pride

in their own exclusive parenthood. Again, some parents place themselves as a shield between the child and his social experiences with other children. Early in his life, they arbitrarily take him out of situations before he can learn to accommodate to them. This keeps the natural socializing process from functioning. It narrows the child's opportunity to develop the techniques of getting along with his peers. One of the major problems of parenthood is to learn one's proper place in this social learning process involving the child and his relations to other children. In a fourth type of situation the child is overpraised for even his more minor achievements, the obvious effect of which is to prevent him from learning the satisfactions of real achievement. In other words, the parent becomes a soft pillow between the child and the realities of life, and there is a resultant development of attitudes in the child which often continue into adult life. One can readily detect the persons in the adult world who expect praise and even outright flattery for doing only the more ordinary tasks.

In summary, how the child transfers from the world of family life to that of childhood, and later to adulthood, depends to a large extent on the parents, how they have functioned and what they have sought to achieve. Have they contrived to make the child independent and capable of dealing with his problems, have they sheltered him, has their major objective been to instill obedience, or have they kept him in ignorance of the realities of life? These parental attitudes toward the child's social experiences in his own world, and the child's responses to them, constitute an integral chapter in human development.

#### CHILD RESPONSES TO TRANSFER PROBLEMS

Child responses to these transfer problems are considered usually in terms of the rate and consequent age at which the transfer is made, and children are grouped as developing socially at (1) a normal, (2) an accelerated, or (3) a retarded rate of growth. This approach is important, particularly when related to measurements of other aspects of child development. Emphasis here, however, will be upon the type of response, in terms of social interaction, which children make to these transfer problems. To understand these responses, it seems pertinent again to recall the dual nature of the child's life. He is expected to learn to live with other children; he is compelled to live with his family. His problems are therefore basically twofold, centering in (1) his relations

with his parents or his family world and (2) his relations with his peers in the child world; his responses are accordingly grouped under these two headings.

### *Responses in Relation to Parents.*

The ways of doing and thinking followed by the child or his peer world often do not meet the approval of the parent and the adult world. Most often this disapproval is mild, the peer world being regarded with amused tolerance as among the vagaries of childhood; at times, however, the disapproval may be so marked that his conduct is spoken of as "delinquent behavior." In making their judgments, parents tend to overlook the criterion by which the child is judging, in his desire for social recognition. The essential fact which parents are so prone to forget is that the child whom other children like and seek as a companion is succeeding in building up desirable habits of social behavior. From the adults' point of view his habits and attitudes may not appear satisfactory, but his own group has placed its approval on his manner of working and playing with them and from that standpoint his behavior may be called adequate and efficient. Hence a significant criterion in appraising the social behavior of growing children is the amount of recognition received from the group with whom the children are in daily contact under a variety of circumstances.<sup>11</sup>

It is in the difference between these two criteria that many of the conflicts between child and parent begin; confronted with these conflicts, the following types of response are characteristic of many children:

1. Responses of hostility and resentment are both frequent and inevitable. Karen Horney, the psychoanalyst, emphasizes this type of response and its significance. "The more difficult are his experiences in the family, the more will a child be inclined to develop not only a reaction of hatred toward the parents and other children but a distrustful or spiteful attitude toward everyone. . . . The more a child covers up his grudge against his family, as for instance by conforming with his parents' attitudes, the more he projects his anxiety to the outside world. . . . The general anxiety concerning the 'world' may also

<sup>11</sup> For a study of this kind, the reader is referred to Martha C. Hardy, "Social Recognition at the Elementary School Age," *Journal of Social Psychology*, August, 1937, pp. 365-384.

develop or increase rapidly."<sup>12</sup> The basic response perhaps is rebellion against the parents, leading to open and direct opposition, to efforts at circumvention, or to compliance but with a sullen smoldering resentment. If deeply enough established, such attitudes naturally will be retained and carried over to the adult world.

2. Withdrawal from the child world, coupled with devotion to the teacher rather than the parent, occurs at times. These are the children who seek to become exemplary students in school; their behavior conforms to the teacher's demands; they develop the customary "bag of tricks" to draw attention to their own behavior as well as to the non-conforming behavior of other children. They are the adroit "apple polishers" of the school world.

3. In some cases, however, the withdrawing child centers his allegiance upon the parent. Such children reject the peer world and remain loyal to the family world. Coupled with this, there is often a clever play upon parental generosity or sympathy. There may be hints to the parents about the discrimination of "other children"; and when the "other children" are of different cultural groups, the possibilities for the development of trouble are many and varied. Suggestions may be made to the parents to buy things so that the children may impress other children. Apparently, the opportunities in these situations for parents and children to exploit each other are numerous and tempting.

4. There are many cases in which the differing claims of the family and the peer worlds create conflicts which become crucial, and at times insoluble. Such children are early torn between loyalty to their families and the very human desire for social recognition in the world of other children. It is conflicts of this type which seem to relate themselves to the anxieties which Horney emphasizes as that "insidiously increasing all-pervading feeling of being lonely and helpless in a hostile world."<sup>13</sup>

5. There is, of course, always the possibility of dissociation as a response. This consists in keeping the peer world and the family world apart. Just as the adult learns to organize his Sundays about his duties as a pillar of the church and his Mondays about the realities of the business world, so children adjust early to conflicting situations by

<sup>12</sup> Karen Horney, *The Neurotic Personality of Our Time*, W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., New York, 1937, pp. 88-89.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 89.

compartmentalizing their lives. It is amazing to discover how many children learn to lead double lives; the one, with their peers, and the other, in their families, straddling in one leap the differences between them and contriving steadily to keep one out of sight of the other.

### *Responses in Relation to Peers.*

Because responses in relation to peers will be dealt with in subsequent chapters, reference to them here will be brief. It will suffice only to point out that the normal child tends to give priority to the peer world over the family world in his deep desire to gain social recognition, and that when he does so, many a modern parent becomes alarmed and rushes him to a clinic or to "the psychologist" to find out what is the matter with him. We cannot help but recall here the story of the distraught mother of such a child who rushed to a noted psychiatrist and asked where she could find a good psychiatric clinic. The psychiatrist gravely told her and added this terse bit of advice: "And while you are there, be sure you get a good examination."

Less than ordinary success for the child in his peer world often leads to other types of response, and these will be considered briefly.

1. The child may seek another child world in which special privileges will be given to him. He will search for playmates who will grant protected competition. It may be the neighboring child who has no one else to play with, or a smaller child, or a child of another color, or a child of lower status. Such responses, made by the child or suggested by the parent, are symptomatic and should receive early attention.

2. Some children seek to buy special favors, immunities, or recognition in the peer world. Out of such situations arise those inordinate demands for money which are often encountered in children. In some cases, these demands are met by the parent; in others, the child early seeks ways of earning the money; in still others, he makes theft the solution. Petty thieving among school children is very common and is, for the most part, overlooked or dealt with in a casual manner; it is usually only when large amounts of money or material are involved that a "hue and cry" is raised. There is little doubt but that much of the stealing by children who are old enough to distinguish between mine and thine results from their search for the means of achieving social success.

3. Children withdraw from the child world without transferring their allegiance to teacher or parent. They withdraw now in order to recap-

ture it later. Here one finds the child who practices something in which there is for the time being no competition. This is the child who takes private lessons, usually in activities in which there is a possibility of individual achievement and subsequent success. Often such children are actuated by a strong driving force which seems to say, "I'll show them, I will." We find these children with particular frequency in certain ethnic groups who have peculiar problems in regard to social recognition. It is out of situations of this kind that the artist arises early, with his paradoxical combination of withdrawing from his fellows to achieve levels of performance which will enable him to gain their subsequent acclaim. The spiritual home of the artist has ever been on the terraced slopes of a social no man's land.

4. At times, the child who fails with his peers withdraws only from competition with his own sex, transferring his activities to the opposite sex. This group includes the girl who "hates" other girls. She likes to play only with boys, among whom she finds protected competition. A little later, to enable her to retain her position with the boys, she may permit them special privileges. Some of these may be sexual in nature. One thus comes naturally to understand why sex delinquency and illegitimacy come to be spoken of as forms of compensatory behavior. There is the boy who wants to play only with girls. The other boys are too rough, he says, or uncouth, or uninteresting. To retain his position with the girls, he soon realizes his need for money, and theft may, in time, be his definition of the situation.

5. A great many children who fail or meet with inadequate success in the social life of their peer world seek early to compensate with success in their school work. School success serves many purposes for a child. Through it, he is proving to himself that he is no failure, he is showing other children that there is something in which he can surpass them, he is impressing his parents and other adults who regard such success as a virtue. Solutions of this kind are particularly feasible among middle-class persons, but it is not too much to say that among all classes very high levels of scholastic performance are an end product of the withdrawing technique. This serves to explain also the widespread reluctance of many "bright" children to be too conspicuous in their school performance. Developments of this kind are, however, most frequent in the adolescent years.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Annie G. Beck, "School Success as a Withdrawal Mechanism in Two Adolescents," *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, April-June, 1935, pp. 87-94.

## THE PROCESS OF SOCIAL WEANING

As the child grows older, the relative importance which he attaches to his peer and his family worlds gradually changes. At first, as has been noted, the family world is of primary importance to him, and the peer world is incidental. But by the time that the ordinary boy and girl reach their twelfth year, the peer world definitely surpasses the family world in its importance to them. From the twelfth to the twentieth year, the young person reorganizes his personality on an increasingly independent basis. Obviously, this entails the establishment of a new relationship between child and family, involving a modification of family attitudes and ties to meet the child's demands for self-affirmation. The child is growing away from the family, it is commonly said. There is an emotional detachment from the family, and a reorganization of habit patterns away from childish obedience and dependence to a relative independence which permits the young person to face the world "without turning back." For this growing-away process, the term social weaning seems appropriate.

To avoid possible misunderstanding, it should be pointed out that social weaning does not mean necessarily leaving the parental roof, although this is often involved; or defiance of the parents' legitimate authority, although this may have to be reinterpreted; or the manifestation of insolent or disorderly behavior, although this appears at times as a by-product. Social weaning means a reorganization of the child-parent relationship in recognition of the child's growing maturity. It is this aspect which is fundamental and needs to be emphasized.

Like the physical weaning from infantile methods of taking food, social weaning is neither easy nor simple as a rule. Involving a fundamental change in an established emotional relationship, it is often attended by emotional outbursts and depressions. Since it requires the successful readjustment of two parties to the process, i.e., both child and family, one of them frequently lags behind the other, either in capacity to make the change or in disposition to do so, or both. The attitudes of parents are particularly important. In battling against the inevitable, rather than anticipating and facilitating it, unwise parents not only make the process more painful for themselves and the child, but often compel him to reshape his sense of loyalty to his family group. "The spirit of loyalty that had been automatic, but in which he took pride, becomes a fetter to hold him in subserviency. He has to recast even the past in order to reconstruct his family relationship, and in the process



may react against the injustice, the tyranny, and even the dislike which he believes the parent with whom he struggles has shown toward him."<sup>15</sup>

Certain features of our contemporary life are particularly prone to complicate this process of social weaning. The role of the small-family system, early marriage and childbirth, and the increased health and longevity of parents have already been referred to as tending to create the possessive parent, i.e., the parent who will not let go. Another factor, generally overlooked, is the modern prolongation of childhood resulting from advanced standards of public education and child labor. Not only do these present-day standards postpone the child's entrance into the workaday world and, economically speaking, into the world of self-maintenance, but they also correspondingly prolong the period as well as the completeness of his dependence upon his parents. This situation is seen in its more exaggerated form among students at the collegiate and professional school level. In the years before the outbreak of World War II, as many as one out of nine young people between the ages of eighteen and twenty-two were enrolled in institutions of higher learning. To a large extent, this development has been assessed in terms of the intellectual sharpening of the younger generation. Two additional aspects may, however, be considered. One is the whole personality development of collegiate youth. Is their development balanced, or does the intellectual run beyond the emotional and the social? Does growth in the world of ideas too far exceed acquaintance with the world of reality? Questions of this kind, however important they are per se, are somewhat incidental to our main query here: what does this prolongation of dependence upon their parents do to young people? Does it tend to create a dependent, exacting, taking but not giving type of person—the abused citizen in a world of historically unparalleled luxury? How does a youth of twenty to twenty-two, for example, define to himself his dependence upon his parents? Is it true that he develops often unconsciously a deep and intense emotional resentment against his parents? Is it inevitable that because he owes them so much which it would be so difficult to repay, he tends to rationalize the situation so as to excuse himself from his obligations: (1) his parents are unreasonable in their demands, (2) they do not understand him and are crippling the development of his personality, (3) they are really wealthier than

<sup>15</sup> Ernest R. Groves, *The Family and Its Social Functions*, J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia, 1940, p. 429.

they seem and can well afford the expenditures which they have made?

*Some Symptoms of an Unweaned Condition.*

Social weaning, however, is unlike physical weaning in one marked respect—the fact that frequently it does not happen, wholly or at least in part. In everyday life, one constantly meets the people who have failed at being socially weaned, who have never learned or been allowed to let go of their dependence upon their parents, and who because of the characteristic symptoms that ensue are incapacitated for the activities of adult life. Two illustrations will suffice.

1. In the workaday world, the unweaned person is likely to be constantly expecting or asking for special consideration from his employer. The employer, being the person in authority, is expected to act as the parent did. When this is refused, the employee may indulge in temper tantrums, talk to himself, develop a persecution complex, act like a long-suffering hero, or resign in a huff. Many such persons become intolerable nuisances in the world of business and the professions. Undoubtedly, many a life spent in occupational drifting or failure results from the characteristics of social unweaning.

2. Many a matrimonial failure, too, goes back to a lack of social weaning. The unweaned individual expects his mate to act the way the parent did, to display the attitudes and to assume the roles of the parent in his earlier home life. "Better not marry a man who is tied to his mother's apron strings" is a very old adage which the very new insights are still revealing. "Sometimes," wrote the late Dr. Hollingworth, "the unweaned adult will even refuse to leave the parental home at marriage, and thus subjects the mate to what is likely to be a very restricted life under the roof of parents-in-law. In milder cases, the unweaned mate does not find it necessary to live actually in the parents' house after marriage, but still refuses to leave the town or vicinity where they reside. Perhaps it is stipulated that the mate must live next door, or on the same street with the parental house. In this way a wife may, and often does, ruin the career of her husband by restriction; and a husband may ruin the happiness of his wife by compelling her to live under the direction of his parents."<sup>16</sup>

One particular matrimonial manifestation of an unweaned condition

<sup>16</sup>Leta Hollingworth, *The Psychology of the Adolescent*, D. Appleton-Century Company, Inc., New York, 1928, pp. 52-53.

is the choice of a much older person as a marriage partner. A young man still dominated by his mother is especially likely to marry a woman much older than himself. Statistics on the age of marriage reveal that in from 10 to 15 per cent of all marriages the bride is older than the groom.<sup>17</sup>

#### A SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY OF ADOLESCENCE

Adolescence is one of the most discussed periods of the life span. Whatever conceptions and interpretations of it are presented, there is general agreement that it is a period of stress and strain for the maturing individual. Obviously, adolescence involves many things—complex changes in body structure and functions, accompanying changes in mental expansion and emotional maturing, developing self-consciousness, crystallization of life's values and plans, continuing experiments in social adjustment, and many other things. It is the purpose of the present discussion, not to develop or appraise any of these, but to advance a conception of adolescence in terms of its basic social situations.

The essential fact about this part of the life span is that a rapidly growing and not yet mature person is living, not in one, or two, but in three social worlds. One of these continues to be his family world. True, it is said that the child has been growing out of this world for some time, but there is still the stubborn fact that he remains in it. Moreover, as has been emphasized, the contemporary boy and girl who complete high school, customarily at the age of eighteen, are obliged to live in, and to be subject to—at least in many respects—their family world. Whatever the individual variations of the situation may be, the basic facts are that the adolescent lives at home, is dependent upon his parents economically and otherwise, and continues to be subject to at least some of the rules and requirements of the family world. Moreover, the intangible bonds of family loyalty continue to hold him. To this family world the adolescent must adjust, at least in one large segment of his life.

The second world in which the adolescent lives is his peer world, i.e., the world of other adolescents. These are the years when the desire for social approval is stronger than perhaps at any other time of life, and there is the added fact of a shift to the adolescent world of the

<sup>17</sup> James H. S. Bossard, *Marriage and the Child*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1940, chap. 3.

opposite sex. With this shift a whole new world opens, in which one must achieve status and recognition and to which one must adjust. It is as if the peer world had added another dimension.

Third, there is the adult non-family world, which has been creeping slowly over the horizon and has gradually been making itself known to the adolescent. Early contacts with this world are sporadic and incidental—through kinsfolk, in books, as a phase of neighborhood relationships, through the radio and daily press, perhaps in the realities of part-time employment, and finally in the prospects of and plans for future employment. Somewhere, sometime, in this adolescent period comes the realization, at times quite suddenly, of the stark reality of this adult world, its inevitability, its serious and exacting nature, its distinctive code and requirements.

Sometimes, however, the shift from the peer to the adult non-family world is very abrupt. This is particularly true in the case of many college and university folk. Four years of a happy and relatively carefree life in the peer world and the transfer into the adult world may occur within the twinkling of a week. The late William Percy has written about this with understanding. "Probably there is no nostalgia so long-lived and hopeless," he says, "as that of the college graduate returning to his native town. He is a stranger though he is at home. He is sick for a communal life that was and can never be again, a life merry with youth, and unshadowed by responsibilities. He is hungry for the easy intimacies which competitive anxious living does not provide. He is unproved when proof is demanded on every side. In this alien environment, the only one he may now call his own, he is unknown, even to himself."<sup>18</sup>

This, then, is the perennial sociological problem of the adolescent, that he must live in three worlds, each distinct in many respects from the others, each changing with the passage of time, and each changing in its meaning and importance to him. However intriguing, however romantically expectant, this is not an easy stage in the life span.

The modern age brings its own complexities. In olden times, in primitive societies, in sacred cultures, these three worlds are not too dissimilar. The ways of doing and saying tend to be much alike, and there is considerable overlapping of personnel. The peer world consists of siblings and kinsfolk, and the adults world is but an enlarged family.

<sup>18</sup> William Alexander Percy, *Lanterns on the Levee*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1941, p. 125.

Today, the cultural patterns and pressures of these three worlds are often wholly or largely unlike each other, with little or no duplication of personnel. It is in the caldron of the modern American community that these conflicting values and colliding behavior patterns are thrown together and, heated by the fires of adolescence, attain at times an explosive force. This is the contemporary sociological problem of adolescence.

#### rites of passage

The social development of the individual, in all societies, involves a series of well-defined stages, each of which is characterized by its own pattern of obligations, privileges, and types of relationships with his fellows. We are concerned here with these stages in the earlier part of the life cycle. In terms of the frame of reference employed in this chapter, these changes mean the transfer from one world of childhood to another. Other recent discussions speak of the transfer from one age category to another;<sup>19</sup> although it uses a different classificatory device, this is similar in meaning.

When these changes are so marked and comprehensive as to involve the individual's whole habitual interaction system, the term crises is applied to them. For example, when a person comes to puberty, gets married, or is initiated into some important new association, his relations to large numbers of other individuals are changed. To restore equilibrium after such crises, many peoples develop ceremonial rites which may be thought of as social techniques to restore equilibrium among the affected person on a new basis. When these rites are associated with the crises in the social development of the individual, they are spoken of as *rites of passage*, a term first introduced by Van Gennep.<sup>20</sup> Several types of such rites will be described briefly.

1. Rites marking the transfer from infant to child or from the family to the child world are not found very frequently. When they do occur, they tend to be simple in character and limited in scope of observation to the family circle. "However, in societies in which children are used as an excuse for ostentation in connection with competitions for prestige they may become elaborate public affairs. Also, in societies having strong patterns of primogeniture, the early category transfers of an eldest

<sup>19</sup> Ralph Linton, "Age and Sex Categories," *American Sociological Review*, October, 1942, pp. 589-604.

<sup>20</sup> A. Van Gennep, *Les Rites de Passage*, Nourry, Paris, 1909.

child may be accompanied by elaborate rituals while those of younger children receive little or no attention."<sup>21</sup> In contemporary American society there is little of this character except the child's formal enrollment in school, or the children's social gatherings to signalize the beginning of the school career.

2. Much more frequent are the ceremonial rites marking the transfer from childhood to the adolescent stage. Many societies commemorate this in a rather spectacular way, by means of the well-known puberty rites. The implications of these rites, in their exactions from the novitiate, are often severe, particularly for boys.<sup>22</sup> The custom of mutilating or marking the candidate is quite frequent. The scarification of boys by knocking out their front teeth, circumcision, subincision, and tattooing are common steps in these ceremonies, serving as symbols of membership and the new relationships being entered. Among many peoples, too, the puberty rite serves as a period of instruction, the accompanying physiological activities functioning to impress the novitiate with the importance of the lessons he is learning.

In our contemporary culture, there are certain observances which have a somewhat similar significance in this transitional process. Among these may be enrollment in a dancing class, the privilege of entertaining the opposite sex, entrance to high school, confirmation, or a little later, for girls in the upper classes, a formal coming-out party.

3. Marriage is the most universally observed and the most strongly emphasized of all the crises rites. It also serves the most functions. Among these are: (a) the founding of a new conjugal family unit, (b) the establishment of new relationships between the two kinship groups, and (c) the transfer of the participants to the adult stage. This third function operates much more frequently for the male than for the female. "Except in the case of child marriage," Linton writes, "a first wedding always promotes a man to full adult status, but there are a number of societies in which women are promoted only with the birth of a first child."<sup>23</sup> The importance of this function is proved by the

<sup>21</sup> Linton, *op. cit.*, pp. 598-599.

<sup>22</sup> For an interesting illustration of the puberty rite, the reader is referred to A. R. Brown, *The Andaman Islanders*, University Press, Cambridge, 1922; Raymond Firth, *We, the Tikopia*, American Book Company, New York, 1936, chap. 13; and John W. M. Whiting, *Becoming a Kwoma*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1941.

<sup>23</sup> Linton, *op. cit.*, p. 598.

frequency with which remarriages receive slight or even no ceremonial accompaniment.

This reference to function serves to call attention to the basic purpose in all these rites. Van Gennep, who first recognized the significance of this type of ceremony, pointed out that in all such rites there were three consecutive parts, always occurring in the same order. These he termed *separation*, *marge*, and *aggregation*, which may be restated as *separation*, *transition*, and *incorporation*. These steps suggest what the crises rites really do. They call attention, in a formal and solemn manner, to the fact that the person is leaving one stage, group, age category, or social world, and entering another. This transfer is impressed upon the group that is left (*separation*), and the group that is entered (*incorporation*). Besides serving the ends of beauty and the non-rational needs of human beings, the ceremony indicates in a definitely precise manner what is happening, emphasizes the exceptional importance of the occasion, and makes it more impressive, just as the prestige of the law is enhanced by the ceremony of court procedure, or the majesty of the king by his coronation in church.

### *The Contemporary Status of Rites of Passage.*

Recent centuries have witnessed a definite trend away from ceremonialism in our western culture. Many factors have combined to bring this about. One goes back to the rise of Protestantism. An inevitable phase of this religious revolt was a rebellion against the elaborate ritual of the Roman Catholic Church, and its subsequent development of the barren and austere meetinghouse in New England and the general meagerness of the Protestant ritual. Second has been the increase of other forms of aesthetic satisfaction, for ceremony undoubtedly is often set up as an end in itself to satisfy the aesthetic needs of people. Similarly, education and individual judgment have come to be emphasized as ways of meeting crises, in preference to the prescribed routine of the ceremonial rite. Finally, the spread of the democratic cult, with its matter-of-fact tonal quality, has broken the hold of the conventional and traditional way of doing a thing. Obviously, it is in the United States that these factors have developed historically in very strong form, so that, coupled with the newness of the country and the sparsity of its cultural past, the lack of the ceremonial has come, in many ways, to be raised to the proportions of a national virtue.

It cannot be denied that puberty ceremonials have declined most rapidly of all the rites of passage. Puberty has little significance among us today, and involves little change in the culturally patterned behavior of the individual. One finds almost no reference to it in everyday life except for certain periodic problems which girls have with the start of the menstrual flow. The child and the adolescent world constitute distinct stages, but for parents and other adults the lines between them fade out in the continuation of school attendance. Among parents who assume financial responsibility for their children as they continue their training from the sixth or an earlier year to the eighteenth or twenty-second, or, in the case of professional school students, to the twenty-fifth or twenty-seventh, there is an understandable tendency to ignore the successive stages in their children's development. The same thing is true of other adults. The neighbor's son remains a school-boy, even though he is a second-year medical school student aged twenty-four. Ceremonials emphasizing the stages in this school training, in the form of commencement exercises, seem entirely proper; rites commemorating stages of advancing maturity of other kinds come to be regarded as out of place.

This relative absence of rites of passage in the lives of modern American youth would seem to have great significance. To neither non-related adult, parent, nor child is there brought in a formal and impressive way a clear consciousness of the changes which the young person is really undergoing. Because the school career continues, because the financial dependence upon the parents remains unchanged, adult society continues to regard these young people as children, insists that they retain the submissive role of childhood, and, what is most significant, demands that they follow the behavior patterns of childhood. These adult attitudes focus most sharply upon sex, and during the very period of the young person's sexual awakening and biological preparation for sex experimentation. One of the strongest taboos in our culture is on a child's sexual activity; in most states, he is not allowed to marry without the consent of his parents. Everywhere there is a taboo, supported by law, religion, and popular sanctions, against sexual relations between persons who are not married. In some circles, these restrictions are so strong that the subject of sex is not even supposed to be mentioned.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>24</sup> John Dollard, Leonard W. Doob, et. al., *Frustration and Aggression*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1939.



This decline of ceremonialism is manifest even in so solemn and beautiful a crisis as marriage. A recent writer has called attention to the "dreary, dingy room," far less inviting than "the visitors' section of a jail," in which New York City issued its 93,085 marriage licenses in 1941. "Cigar and cigarette butts littered the floor. The benches and chairs were battered, and the tables were covered by filthy, ink-stained blotters."<sup>25</sup> Further reference is made to the prevalence of civil ceremonies, especially during the war years; the pitiful, garish marriage parlors, open day and night; the short ceremony, taking only thirty seconds; and the marrying justices who specialize in this type of matrimonial arrangements. Public concern with the rising tide of divorce and other family problems might do well to focus attention upon the ceremonial setting of this crisis rite.

#### SUMMARY

1. The child's social development involves his gradual growth from complete dependence upon his family to his emergence as a relatively self-sufficient person.

2. Five well-defined stages are customarily identified in this process. They are: (a) the period of infancy, (b) the pre-gang stage, (c) the gang stage, (d) the negative phase, and (e) adolescence.

3. Transfer from the family world to the school and gang or peer world involves revolutionary changes and major problems for the child, such as: (a) the passage from protected to unprotected competition, (b) the changed responses expected, (c) differences between the culture of the family and that of the peer world, and (d) conflicts with parental attitudes.

4. In answer to these transfer problems, children develop a variety of responses toward their parents and the peer world, ranging from intense conflict to marked compensatory loyalty.

5. The concept of social weaning is applied to the process whereby the child grows away from his family and learns to reorganize his personality on an increasingly independent basis. Modern culture often makes this an exceedingly difficult process.

6. Some children are never weaned socially from their parents. The resultant symptoms often incapacitate them for the activities of adult life, especially in the occupational and matrimonial spheres of life.

<sup>25</sup> Dorothy Walworth, "Just Married—And How," *Kiwanis Magazine*, October, 1942.

7. Adolescence, conceived in situational terms, is a peculiarly difficult period, involving the combined problems of living in three social worlds: the family world, that of one's peers, and the adult non-family world. Often the demands and pressures of the three worlds are in disagreement.

8. Among many peoples, these crises changes are commemorated by ceremonial rites which serve to call the attention of all interested persons to the stages which are left behind and those which are being entered.

9. There is a definite trend away from ceremonialism in contemporary American culture. Current emphases are upon education and individual judgment as methods of meeting life's crises.

[illegible]

The proportion of such cases in this country is unduly large. The reasons for this seem to arise principally from the fact that so many young people are growing up in, and adjusting to, a peer and a non-family adult culture which differs materially from the culture of their family world. Such culture differentials are of many kinds and degrees, and are present to some extent in the situational background of most children; but there are at least three groups of children in which the incidence of marked differentials is relatively high. They are: (1) children growing up in foreign-culture homes, (2) urban-dwelling children of rural-reared parents, and (3) cases in which the general currents of cultural change have been accepted in very unequal degrees by the members of the family world. An analysis of these three groups, their problems, and characteristic responses constitutes the subject of this chapter.

The rearing of American children in foreign-culture homes has been the perennial result of the stream of immigration flowing into our country. In fact, its dimensions identify it as a deluge rather than a stream. From 1820 to 1930, the total number of legally admitted im-

migrants into the United States was 37,762,000. Emphasis is given to the fact that these were *legal* admissions, for it is well known that the smuggling of immigrants into this country has been a time-honored form of law violation. Historically, this inflow of people is as old as our national history, statistically, the major portion of it took place within a generation. A few strokes of the mathematical brush will outline the picture. In 1890, the population of the United States was, in round numbers, 63,000,000. From 1890 to 1924, a period of 34 years, 22,500,000 immigrants were admitted legally—a mass movement with few if any parallels in human history. Obviously we have here, as a background fact, one of the outstanding facts of history.

It is clear that a mass movement of such proportions will give rise to many problems, and the literature dealing with immigration and its aftermath has given consideration to many of them. Some of the problems emphasized have dealt with the effects of this large-scale impact upon the country and its institutional life; others have concerned the nature and range of the changes resulting among the newcomers themselves. In considering this latter group of effects, there has been a tendency to include only the changes in the first generation, and to deal only with the more tangible evidences of their adjustment, such as conformity to American dress, learning the English language, naturalization, and other similar forms of behavior. Only gradually did there develop any appreciation of the meaning of this migration for the second and third generations, and how it would evidence itself, not in regard to the externals of living, but in the more subtle aspects of attitudes, values, compensatory philosophies, family patterns, and inter-generation conflicts. It is with these subsequent and, in a sense, secondary effects upon the second and third generations that we are concerned in this chapter.

### *Some Statistical Dimensions.*

The second generation makes a generally feasible point of departure, and fortunately the United States Census Bureau has identified this generation in its nativity classification as the native-born white population of foreign-born or mixed parentage. Although the information gathered on this nativity class in the 1940 census is far from satisfactory for our purposes, we can gather from it certain dimensional aspects of the problem involved. Based on a 5 per cent sample of the population and multiplied by 20, the total number of native-born whites of foreign

or mixed parentage is placed at 23,157,580, or 17.5 per cent of the total population. This number, added to the 11,419,138 foreign-born whites in 1940, totals 34,576,718, or 26.1 per cent of the total population. This total, which is referred to as the population of foreign white stock, compares with 25,902,383 (21.1 per cent), 13,983,405 (11.4 per cent) and a total of 39,885,788 (32.5 per cent) respectively in 1930.

The composition of the population of foreign white stock in terms of national origin is particularly important in the present discussion, in that it reveals roughly its cultural diversity. Of the 34,576,718 persons who fell into this category in 1940, only 27.4 per cent of the total hailed from northwestern Europe. A third (33.1 per cent) derived from central European countries—Germany, Poland, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Yugoslavia, named in the order of their numerical importance. Approximately one out of six (15.1) came from southern Europe, principally from Italy. One out of ten (10.4) came from eastern Europe, chiefly from Russia; a total of 12.1 per cent, from the western hemisphere, mostly from Canada and Mexico; and 1 per cent from Asiatic sources. It is obvious from these percentages that a substantial proportion of our present foreign white stock comes from countries whose culture differs from that of the older population elements who constitute the major part of our population. This is particularly true among the younger age groups.

Most Americans, especially those of older vintage, are prone to think of immigration as something that terminated a number of years ago as a result of restrictive legislation. It is pertinent to the present discussion to recall that 4,635,640 immigrants were admitted to the United States during the period 1921–1940. Of these, 1,591,363, or more than a third, reported their occupations as unskilled; and 1,330,794, or almost three out of every ten, came from Germany, Austria, Italy, and Poland.

For present purposes, data on the age distribution of the groups under consideration are significant. Examining the more complete information in the 1930 census report, we find that about seven and a half million of the forty million persons of foreign white stock were under 15 years of age, and another five and a quarter million fell into the 15-to-24 age span. Of all individuals under 15 years of age in 1930, one out of five (20.3 per cent) was native-born white of foreign-born or mixed parentage; they lived largely in cities (76.4 per cent), particularly

in the larger cities, such as New York, Chicago, and Philadelphia, in which they constituted three-fourths, two-thirds, and one-half, respectively, of all children. This nativity group constituted 31.6 per cent of all urban children. Similarly important is their regional distribution. Of the 23,157,580 second-generation group in 1940, roughly seven out of ten, or 16,176,160, lived in the New England, Middle Atlantic, and East North Central States.

Data on the mother tongue spoken in the homes of the American people, as gathered in the 1940 census enumeration, are particularly important in this connection, and the reader is urged to reexamine the summary of these figures presented in Chapter X. To appreciate their significance fully, the sociological role of language should be recalled. First, language is part of the culture of a people comparable to its family system, its economic life, or its religious institutions. Second, it is also a mechanism which transmits the remainder of the cultural system. Because of this function, it comes to be peculiarly interrelated with the details and spirit of the entire culture. Language is therefore both part and symbol of a culture, reflecting its essence in such a way that another language cannot serve as a substitute. Just as many aspects of a culture cannot be expressed in another language because there are no words to do so, similarly many words can be understood only by explaining them in their cultural setting. Words represent not things but our behavior with regard to things. It is through words that we organize our thoughts about things. Speech, which may be thought of as the active, individual expression of language, is the vocal aspect of personality. It is particularly revealing, first because it is vocal, and second because, being learned early in life and thoroughly ingrained from constant use, it betrays, as almost nothing else does, the origin and background of the person. The linguistic culture is, then, a peculiarly pervasive aspect of the entire cultural background of the personality.

An examination of mother tongue data for the United States suggests, among other things, two facts which are very pertinent to the present discussion. First, the persistence of languages of Old World origin may be taken as an indication of the persistence of other parts of the cultural configuration, presumably of those parts that have an important bearing upon behavior. So much has been said about cultural changes and conformity to the American pattern on the part of various immigrant groups that it is well to recognize the other side of this process, i.e., the dogged persistence among them of many cultural

elements. From this follows the second fact, namely, that the problems to be identified in this chapter are not confined necessarily to second-generation families. The data on the persistence of foreign-language homes where both parents are native-born of native-born parentage furnish ample evidence on this point.

*Some Problems That Arise.*<sup>1</sup>

The person and the family who come to this country as immigrants are the product of the culture in which they were reared. Naturally they bring that culture with them, and on the basis of it begin life in the New World. From the very beginning, however, modifications must be made, particularly in what might be called the externals of life—clothing, housing, domestic equipment, occupations, and the like. On the other hand, ways of thinking, attitudes, ideas, values, especially as they express themselves in matters of religion, family life, and parent-child relationships, are modified very slowly, if at all.

For the children in these families the situation is considerably different. Being young, their integration into the parents' culture is not so complete and fixed, to begin with. Moreover, their contacts are chiefly with the school and other peer agencies in the new culture which are concerned with the world of ideas, attitudes, values, philosophies, and patterns of parent-child relationships. In short, the cultural pressures in America upon the children of immigrants differ materially from those exerted upon their parents, being strongest for the children in the elements of the culture in which they are weakest for the parents.

Two other sets of cultural pressures show similar generational differences. One consists of the standardizing pressures of the contemporary world, such as the daily press, the cinema, the radio, and modern methods of transportation, which make increasingly difficult, if not impossible, the maintenance of cultural pockets in which selected groups can isolate themselves socially to follow their own cultural patterns. The other set of pressures are sociopsychological in character and consist of the drive for conformity, the desire to belong, the longing to be accepted by one's peer group. Obviously, both sets operate much more strongly in childhood and the adolescent years.

What happens inevitably, as a result of these pressures, is that the

<sup>1</sup>The literature on the problems of the second generation is too extensive to be listed here. For an excellent summary, together with bibliography, the reader is referred to William Carlson Smith's excellent work, *Americans in the Making*, D. Appleton-Century Company, Inc., New York, 1939.

younger generation grow away from their more conservative and culturally persistent elders, so that, as time goes on, they come more and more to live in different cultural worlds. But for the younger generation there is the added complication that they are forced, to the extent that they are subject to the control of their elders, to live in both worlds.

This situation has been considered by a number of sociological students. Some of them, following Thomas<sup>2</sup> and Park and Miller,<sup>3</sup> have viewed it primarily as a transitional process in which the immigrant slowly learns to adjust to his new social heritage. These earlier treatises are particularly valuable in showing how extensive and pervasive are the necessary changes—from one set of values to another, from a primary-group form of living to one consisting largely or wholly of secondary-group contacts, from the extended kinship group to the immediate form of family, from tradition to education as a regulating principle of behavior, and from communal to individual habits of life, all of these expressing themselves not in the form of broad principles but rather in the minutiae of everyday living.<sup>4</sup>

*The Problems of Culture Conflict.* Most of the more recent students, however, have viewed the process in terms of conflict between successive generations. Writing of his own experience, Mangione says: "The more aware I became of the great differences between their [the parents] Latin world and the Anglo-Saxon world, the more disturbed I was; nor was I the only child of Sicilian parents who was disturbed. We sensed the conflict between the two worlds in almost everything our parents did or said. Yet we had to adjust ourselves to their world if we wanted any peace."<sup>5</sup> One of Pauline Young's cases speaks similarly: "You see, we young people live in two worlds, and learn the ways of both worlds—the ways of our parents and the ways of the big world. Sometimes we get mixed up and we fight. . . . Many times I get mad, and then I leave the house. You see, I don't want to

<sup>2</sup>W. I. Thomas and Florian Znaniecki, *The Polish Peasant*, Richard G. Badger, Boston, 1919.

<sup>3</sup>Robert E. Park, and Herbert A. Miller, *Old World Traits Transplanted*, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1921.

<sup>4</sup>For an excellent illustration of how seemingly unimportant differences even in material culture may have far-reaching implications, see K. Shridharani, *My India, My America*, New York, Duell, Sloan & Pearce, Inc., New York, 1941, chap. 5.

<sup>5</sup>Jerre Mangione, *Mount Allegro*, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1942, p. 228.



the English language; the other results from the traditions of their culture, which frown upon their development of out-of-home contacts. As a result, in many of these families there is a relative, and often a complete, lack of parental capacity. What happens all too often is a reversal of the process: it is the child who comes to the aid of the parents, the child who acts as interpreter, the child who becomes the intermediary between parent and landlord, the child who learns where the parent can find a job. Thus, whereas all children pass through the stage where they think they know more than their parents, these children *know* that they know more. This may be one of the basic factors in the subsequent development of their personalities.

One of the most perplexing problems for parents of more recent foreign extraction has to do with the techniques of parenthood. The idea is widespread in this country that a child should not be trained and disciplined to be subservient to the parent, but should be helped to develop his own personality. This involves a democratic-experimental approach to child rearing, a greater respect for the child's intelligence and his capacity for self-discipline. These ideas are, to be sure, of comparatively new formulation, many of them dating from recent developments in the sciences of human behavior. They are still understood by a relatively small proportion of the community, but they are acted upon in general by a much larger part of the population. The problems which this changing philosophy of child rearing creates are not easy for intelligent American parents who are capable emotionally of accepting the ideas involved; they are particularly difficult for many parents who are still dominated by ideas of another and older sort. The majority of the immigrants who have come into this country since 1900 hail from countries whose culture was not imbued with democratic family ideals, where standards of behavior were more fixed and exacting, and where rigorous training during youth was supplemented by the practices and traditions of compulsory military training. Their American-born and -reared children, going to American schools in which these newer ideals and techniques were applied, and mingling with other children reared in such an atmosphere, have looked to their parents for similar treatment. Their parents, on the other hand, informed poorly if at all about the new, naturally cling to the traditions of a lengthy past in which they have been reared, and which to them seem as natural and inevitable as the rising and setting of the sun. Not that the issues on this score were ever fought out on the grounds of abstract principles and philosophies. In the families under considera-

tion they give rise to concrete wrangles over the age at which the child will go to work, the control of his earnings, expenditures for clothing and recreation, and other vital realities in everyday family life. Bewildered parents attempt to enforce Old World ideas with Old World methods; restive children respond with anger and ridicule.

*The Problem of Undue Social Pressure.* Not all families of recent immigrant origin stick resolutely to the old. Many of them hasten with undue speed and aggressiveness to reach for the new. They reject the old before they understand or attain the new. At times, the path from the steerage on the immigrant ship to the gilded mansion and to aspiration to membership in the exclusive social club has been traversed within a single generation; more often, it has been done within only two. The problems of children in such families arise primarily from a too rapid adjustment to American culture and a too intense climbing of the social ladder. As emphasized in an earlier chapter, it is the child who in this driving process becomes the spearhead of the family's ambitions; it is upon him that the resistance, and perhaps resentment, of the older and established groups focus. Thus the child in these families is caught in a cross fire of pressures, one from his kinsfolk, urging him to "make it"; the other from the groups to which he aspires, rejecting his aspirations.

*Cultural Mobility and Family Disorganization.* Considering the situation of families of foreign stock as a whole, the basic process seems to be one of cultural mobility; and the basic resulting problems, those of family and individual disorganization. In the transfer from the Old World culture to that of the New, different members of the family progress at unequal rates. To speak in general terms, the children tend to move more rapidly than the parents; examined more specifically, what occurs most often is that the father moves more rapidly than the mother, and the younger children more easily and rapidly than the older ones. Under the individualizing influences of American life, every member of the family moves at his particular rate. The inevitable result is the disorganization of the family and the development of conflict situations based on the difference not merely in personality traits but also in cultural allegiances.

### *Some Patterns of Response.*

It is impossible within the confines of a few pages to assess the response patterns of millions of children to crises of cultural mobility such as have been described in families of foreign white stock. Life is

too complex and richly varied to do this. We can at best attempt only to identify some of the more apparent of their responses under the following five headings:

*The Child's Rejection of His Parents.* Perhaps the basic reaction in the field of parent-child relationships that runs like a recurrent theme through the responses of so many of these children is rejection of their parents. Much has been said about the fact that many parents reject their children; here the process is in reverse. Just as the parents' rejection of the child takes many forms, so the child's rejection of his parents expresses itself in a variety of ways. In some cases, there is refusal to tolerate the parent's presence or to remain under the parental roof. This is the child who runs away from home, who engages in delinquencies which promise or express his independence, or who merely drop out of sight. More often, however, the rejection is partial and symbolic. For example, the child changes his name. Giovanni is transmuted to Grant, Cohen becomes Gaylord, and Rudyzypka is eased into Smith. To be sure, such changes are rationalized in various ways, but rejection of the parent is the substance which casts the rationalizing shadows. Or the child rejects the parental religion. Literally thousands of younger Jews in this country in recent years have cut adrift from their biological and cultural destiny by their rejection of their family's religious rituals. Most frequent of all, and in many ways as serious as any, is rejection of the parents' authority. A combination of facts tends to precipitate this response. First, the child grows beyond his parents in his understanding of life situations and resources. He knows more about many things than they do, and has better insight into what the situation demands. Second, the parents, feeling insecure, become defensive and stubbornly insist on their authoritarian rights as transmitted through their cultural heritage. In the inevitable conflict that follows, the child rebels against their authority. Because, the conflict is usually chronic, rebellion against authority becomes a habit of response. Once formed and exercised against the first embodiment of authority that the child knows, the transfer of these habits to subsequent forms of authority—in the school room, the workshop, and one's own home—frequently follows. Thus, the second-generation child often develops into the type of social rebel that is clearly identifiable in contemporary society by an unfailing willingness to rebel against anything, once it is recognized as part of the established order of things.

*The Marginal Man.* The child's rejection of his family, whether

partial or complete, substantial or symbolic, is but part of the larger transition process from immigrant to American status and culture. In the course of this process, which is generally slow and often painful, there is characteristically an intermediate stage in which the immigrant, or his child or even his grandchild, lets go of the old culture, but not wholeheartedly, and takes on the new, but not completely. The result is the emergence of a person who lives and shares the cultural life of two peoples without being entirely identified with either one. To designate this type, Robert E. Park coined the phrase "the marginal man," and it has found widespread acceptance. As defined by Park, a marginal person is "a cultural hybrid, a man living and sharing in the cultural life and traditions of two distinct peoples; never quite willing to break, even if he were permitted to do so, with his past and his tradition, and not quite accepted . . . in the new society in which he now seeks a place."<sup>9</sup> In other words, he is in a marginal position between two cultures that have not fused and that may be in conflict with each other.

A great deal of the autobiographical material that has been left by immigrants and their descendants fits into and illustrates this basic concept. Its essential meaning for the individual, as revealed by this material, has been well stated by Stonequist when he spoke of the marginal man as "one who is poised in psychological uncertainty between two (or more) social worlds, reflecting in his soul the discords and harmonies, repulsions and attractions of these worlds, one of which is often 'dominant' over the other; within which membership is implicitly if not explicitly based upon birth or ancestry (race or nationality); and where exclusion removes the individual from a system of group relations."<sup>10</sup> Equally penetrating is the identification of this poised psychological uncertainty by a non-sociologist, the late Colonel T. E. Lawrence, in referring to his attempts to become an Arab.

In my case, the effort for these years to live in the dress of Arabs, and to imitate their mental foundation, quitted me of my English self, and let me look at the West and its conventions with new eyes; they destroyed it all for me. At the same time, I could not sincerely take on the Arab skin; it was an affectation only. Easily was a man made an infidel, but hardly might he be made a convert to another faith. I had dropped one form and

<sup>9</sup> Robert E. Park, "Human Migration and the Marginal Man," *American Journal of Sociology*, May, 1928, p. 892.

<sup>10</sup> Everett V. Stonequist, *The Marginal Man: A Study in Personality and Culture Conflict*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1937, p. 8.

not taken on the other, and was become like Mohammed's coffin in our legend, with a resultant feeling of intense loneliness in life, and a contempt, not for other men, but for what they do. Such detachment came at times to a man exhausted by prolonged physical effort and isolation. His body plodded on mechanically, while his reasonable mind left him, and from without looked down critically on him, wondering what that futile lumber did and why. Sometimes these selves would converse in the void: and then madness was very near, as I believe it would be near the man who could see things through the veils at once of two customs, two educations, two environments.<sup>11</sup>

Similarly apt is Roucek's remark about living in a spiritual vacuum.<sup>12</sup>

Two further developments of the concept of the marginal man, presented by Stonequist, are of value and will be discussed briefly. The first involves the existence of two general types of situation: one where the cultural difference also includes a racial (biological) difference, as is the case with the mulatto, the Eurasian, and the Jew; the second, where the difference is purely cultural. Each of these obviously can be further subdivided, with significant differences.

The second development of the concept involves its examination in terms of the life cycle of the individual. Stonequist refers to three stages. The first is the stage of preparation, when the individual is being introduced into the two cultures. Usually this stage is confined to early childhood, and the person involved may not be conscious of a personality problem. The second is the crisis stage, when an awareness of the conflict appears and the individual's life organization may become seriously disturbed. The third stage covers the period when the enduring responses of the individual to the situation are made. Some of the forms which these responses may take will appear in succeeding sections of this chapter.

*Frustration and Aggression.* The marginal position is ordinarily not only confusing but also distressing. Movement away from it tends to be slow and difficult. Often there is opposition from the dominant culture and group. The inevitable result is that marginal persons develop strong feelings of frustration, and it is out of these feelings that certain characteristic response patterns develop.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> T. E. Lawrence, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, Jonathan Cape, London, 1935, pp. 31-32.

<sup>12</sup> J. S. Roucek, "The Problem of Becoming Americanized," *Sociology and Social Research*, January-February, 1933, p. 243.

<sup>13</sup> John Dollard, Leonard W. Doob, et al., *Frustration and Aggression*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1939.

One of the common responses to continued frustration is the development of an oppression psychosis. This manifests itself characteristically in marked hypersensitivity. Such a person or group reveals a complete incapacity to view himself or his problems objectively. Miller illustrates this in the case of women who through long history have belonged to an oppressed group; their prevailing psychosis is shown by the reply of the woman whose husband said to her, "The trouble with women is that they take everything personally." "That isn't so," she said heatedly, "I don't." Whatever one's reaction to this illustration, its underlying nature can easily be identified in the contemporary generation of the immigrant stream whose aspirations are still being balked by time, their own inadequacies, or the opposition of the dominant group.<sup>14</sup>

Perhaps the inevitable consequence of frustration is aggression, a lack of which can certainly not be attributed as a rule to the second- and third-generation stock. Aggressive behavior takes a variety of forms. At times, it shows itself in a tendency to be rather grasping. It is as though the afflicted person must obtain more than his share, often considerably more, to be convinced that he is merely obtaining his minimum due. One who knows frustrated groups will realize at once how common this trait is. Not always understood, it arouses further antagonism in those dealing with such individuals, so that, like most pathological behavior, it defeats its own basic purposes.

At other times, aggression takes the form of conspicuous behavior. There is a straining effort to attract attention, to do the exceptional or unusual or striking thing. It is as though the frustrated person were saying: "You are not noticing me the way I want to be noticed. See what I am doing. Don't you think it is striking? Am I not a most unusual person, who ought therefore to be singled out for adequate social recognition?" Unfortunately, this "showing-off" process frequently passes beyond the conventional bounds. Then it expresses itself in behavior that departs from good taste, that becomes illicitly unconventional or turns into delinquency. The relatively higher rate of juvenile delinquency among second-generation immigrant children is one of the accepted conclusions in the literature on criminology.

In many cases, there is an aggressive philosophy or set of attitudes which may accompany or take the place of aggressive behavior. Of

<sup>14</sup> Herbert A. Miller, "The Oppression Psychosis and the Immigrant," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, January, 1921, p. 141.

these, one of the most common forms is the tendency to depreciate the success of the dominant group or, even more frequently, to become critical of the entire social system. Thus, we find large proportions of young Jews among our foreign white stock who, despite the Jew's traditional drive for individual economic success, blossom forth into aggressive communists. This incongruous combination is, however, by no means confined to the Jewish group, for it includes the widespread type of American who reveals the curious paradox of developing ideological cults which compensate for his lower-class origins but which completely belie his upper-class aspirations. This paradox seems to be the key to the behavior of many young Americans.

Finally, reference should be made to other compensatory values which frustrated groups in this country have developed. Undoubtedly, the Jews' drive for financial success has been a compensatory development. The Irish, whose history in the old country has for centuries been one of continued frustration, become the policemen of the New World, alert to direct and control the activities of their fellow Americans. Sometimes the compensatory value may take the form of racial or religious solidarity. Here we are again reminded of the Irish whose Catholicism is an obvious symbol of a united front against the Protestant English.

*Leaving the Marginal Status.* The marginal position is not ordinarily a stationary one. Most such persons, especially those in the younger age groups, tend to move in one direction or another. The direction and speed of this movement have considerable bearing as a rule upon the behavior pattern of the individual, so a brief summary of the prevailing situations is next in order.

Most marginal persons, both children and parents, tend to move toward the dominant group and its culture until relative or complete acceptance is obtained. This happens, of course, most frequently where there is no biological barrier. Movement in this direction is often accompanied by a change in names, at times by a renunciation of nationality identification with increasing frequency of marriage into the dominant group, and by other aspects of emancipation from the traditional group. There is some reason to think that this transfer to the dominant group occurs most frequently in the upper and lower classes, and least often at the middle-class level, and that its occurrence among the lower classes often involves a merging with the cheapest and worst aspects of American life.

Movement from the marginal position may be in the opposite direc-

tion, involving a withdrawal from earlier aspirations and a return to one's own group. These are the second-generation Greeks, Italians, etc., who are more Greek or Italian than their parents. Disappointment and defeat lead to a strong compensatory allegiance to their original culture and group, and its expression may take several different forms. Some become leaders of their national culture groups, serving as teachers, editors, lawyers, clergymen, or labor leaders. They act as spokesmen for their people and fight for an improvement in their condition and status. Commonly there is a commercialization of the compensatory drive which they have developed. Others turn hard and bitter, utilizing their influence to rebel against the dominant group and its culture. Such people often develop into aggressive nationalists or revolutionists in the class struggle. Since the dominant group has generally a higher class status, the marginal rebel focuses the resentment he has built up upon the existing class structure.<sup>15</sup>

A third possible movement is away from both groups and culture. Here one finds the lonely, isolated person who organizes his life in the solitude of a social no man's land. Sometimes such individuals harness all their energy to some occupational goal, devoting themselves with a zeal akin to genius to the achievement of some task, finding in its completion the satisfactions that life otherwise denies. Second-generation immigrant children often become excellent students in school in just this way. But the isolated person does not always turn to constructive achievement. Here again is the other fork of the road, with its inevitable accompaniments of delinquency, suicide, alcoholism, occupational drifting, and the like.

*Cultural and Mental Conflict.* Some years ago (1917), William Healy introduced the term mental conflict into general usage among students of behavior. He defined it as "a conflict between elements of mental life, and [it] occurs when two elements or systems of elements are out of harmony with each other."<sup>16</sup> The concept cultural conflict which social scientists have developed in recent years is similar in nature; and their principle that personality is the subjective aspect of culture makes mental and cultural conflict two aspects of the same fundamental situation. Obviously, then, the cultural conflicts which have been shown to characterize so many children of foreign white stock are a fruitful source of mental conflicts.

<sup>15</sup> Herbert A. Miller, *Races, Nations and Classes*, J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia, 1924.

<sup>16</sup> Healy, *op. cit.*



Healy found mental conflict an important factor in the production of juvenile delinquency, and he became increasingly impressed with its relative significance as his work with delinquents continued. Sutherland and others, making their approach from the social side, conclude that culture conflicts are the "stuff" out of which much misconduct develops, and that "the conflict of cultures is . . . the fundamental principle in the explanation of crime."<sup>17</sup> Thus we return again, on the basis of both approaches, to the relatively high rate of delinquency in the second-generation group.

But mental conflicts produce other patterns of response. Here one enters the field of the neuroses and psychoses which are the special province of the psychiatrist. However, the mental symptoms which they identify have significance for sociologists, too. The individual who is neurotically exhausted by the inner conflict of his divided cultural loyalties is a socially ineffective person; mental conflicts are often resolved by rash and impulsive forms of escape which deviate from the commonly accepted social norms.

Not all culture conflicts lead to misconduct, nor are the majority of children of foreign white stock to be thought of as problem children. The effort in the foregoing pages has been to analyze a life process involving a large number of Americans, that is basically important in its implications yet is usually given only limited and superficial attention. One cannot but recall here the words of Santayana: "Fixity of tradition, of custom, of language, is perhaps a prerequisite to a complete harmony in life and mind. Variety in these matters is a lesson to the philosopher and drives him into the cold arms of reason: but it confuses the poet and the saint, and embitters society."<sup>18</sup>

#### URBAN-DWELLING CHILDREN OF RURAL-REARED PARENTS

##### *The Urban Trend.*

Similar in many respects to the immigration stream has been the migration of millions of persons from farms and villages to American

<sup>17</sup> Edwin H. Sutherland, *Principles of Criminology*, J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia, 1939, p. 52. See also Thorsten Sellin, "Culture Conflict and Crime," *Bulletin, Social Science Research Council*, New York, 1938; Louis Wirth, "Culture Conflict and Delinquency," *Social Forces*, June, 1931, pp. 484-492; Eleanor Glueck, "Culture Conflict and Delinquency," *Mental Hygiene*, January, 1937, pp. 46-66.

<sup>18</sup> George Santayana, *Persons and Places*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1944, p. 103.

cities. A few statistical summaries will reveal the scope of this movement in the United States. In 1880, approximately a quarter (28.2 per cent) of the American people lived in cities of 2500 or more inhabitants; by 1940, the percentage was 56.5. From 1920 to 1935, a total of 26,612,000 individuals left farms for cities and towns. This does not include rural immigrants who came to the United States, or persons who migrated from small towns and villages. The transfer from a rural to an urban setting has been the common experience of a large proportion of our families right down to the present.

A substantial part of this movement has been from the rural South to the urban North. It is estimated that 60 per cent of the net migration from farms during the years 1920-1930 was from the rural South. Of this migration, the most clearly defined phase was the trek of southern Negroes to northern cities. From 1910 to 1940, the Negro population of New York City increased from 97,721 to 468,444; of Chicago, from 46,226 to 277,731; of Philadelphia, from 85,637 to 250,880, and of Detroit, from 5840 to 149,119.

*Its Social Significance.* Most students who have concerned themselves with the data on rural-urban migration have emphasized some one or more specialized aspects of this trend, such as new patterns of population distribution, residential mobility, changes in the labor market, the disturbance of political voting strength, or the creation of housing crises. Somewhat less has been said about what would seem to be the basic change involved: the transplanting of millions of individuals and families from one culture to another. For rural life is a cultural system, as is urban life. The differences between them are numerous, fundamental, and pervasive, as Sorokin, Zimmerman, and Galpin, and Burgess, Wirth, and others have shown.<sup>19</sup>

Rural life develops primarily around one occupational complex, agriculture. Cities are industrial and commercial, and thus also more diverse in their occupational range. Rural life involves continuing contacts with nature and knowledge of her gifts and forces, as well as of the limitations she imposes; the urban environment is artificial, with technological progress interjecting ever more artificial layers between

<sup>19</sup> P. A. Sorokin, Carle C. Zimmerman, and Charles C. Galpin, *A Systematic Source Book in Rural Sociology*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1930, vol. 1, chap. 4; Ernest W. Burgess, "Environment and Education," *Supplementary Educational Monographs*, No. 54, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, March, 1942, pp. 1-15; Louis Wirth, "Urbanism as a Way of Life," *American Journal of Sociology*, July, 1938, pp. 1-24.

man and nature. The rural community is smaller, particularly since the advent of the metropolitan area. The density of population, with its attendant proximity of contacts and multiplication of problems of human relations, differs materially between country and city, as does the homogeneity of the population. Cities are made up, much more largely than the country, of diverse races, nationalities, and religions. Social differentiation and stratification vary widely, too, the country not knowing the diversity of roles and social distinctions that are the inevitable accompaniment of city life. Urban life, again, is more mobile, both in point of space and in pursuit of occupation. When rural folks migrate within the rural setting, the movement usually is from one farm to another. Particularly different are the contrasting systems of social interaction. Country people have fewer contacts, they function mostly in primary groups, and there is emphasis upon personalization and continuity of relations, as well as upon a relative informality. City people have more but less durable contacts and they function largely through secondary groups, with the result that their social contacts are more impersonal, more transitory, superficial, conventionalized, and formalized.

It is clear that country and city people live in two quite different environments. The urban environment is highly mechanized, rational, mobile, impersonal, commercialized, cynical, and heterogeneous, the rural environment involves more physical but less nervous effort, there is a closer adjustment to nature, relationships are personalized, there is more stability and informality. These differing environments call forth different ways of living, different sets of values, different personality traits and types. The urban type is identified as intellectual, mercenary, calculating, reserved, sophisticated, and precocious, in contrast to the rural personification of the opposite of these qualities.

*Resultant Problems of Child Development.* The transfer from a rural to an urban culture is a momentous change, involving virtually every aspect of life. In many respects it is similar to the experience of the European immigrant who comes to America. True, there are not the language difficulties that there are in the case of the immigrant; but the very fact that the migration is within the same country, perhaps the same region, with no legal or linguistic barriers, disarms both rural migrants and the urban areas they enter from a proper appreciation of what is actually happening. Certainly, the problems of adjustment faced by rural Negroes who are catapulted overnight into

our large northern cities are no less in number and seriousness than those which confronted the immigrant family of a generation ago. On the other hand, many families who migrate to the city from rural areas adjacent to and under the domination of the city find the transfer less difficult in many ways. In this process of adjusting to an urban culture, different members of the family have different problems. We are concerned here with those common to the children, and three will be considered briefly.

First, there are the problems of the country child's adjustment to the city schools. Dependent upon his capacities and previous training, this may be a relatively simple task. Often, however, this is not the case, especially for children who come from backward rural areas with inadequate schools and teachers, and low scholastic standards. Such children find themselves thrown into trying, conspicuous positions, either as members of a class with much younger and, what is more important, smaller children, or as incompetent students in a class of their own age. Situations of this kind may be very painful, especially to a sensitive child. Considered in scholastic terms, their real significance is to be found in their effect upon the attitudes and behavior of the children involved.

Second, and more important than the challenge of the classroom, there is the country child's adjustment to the social life of his city peers. As was pointed out in an earlier chapter, the newcomer must be tried out. Among boys, this trying-out process involves physical combat. The question whether country or city boys are better fighters is perennial in many school yards, and is resettled with the advent of each new country boy. In this process of social adjustment, the country child again is in a conspicuous position. Social visibility here may be a matter of clothes, speech, or palpable ignorance of city ways; and, as always, it is the bully and the less successful city child who seizes upon this less adjusted member as a vent for the hurt of his own inadequacies. The country boy whose identification as such affords a Roman holiday for his urban tormentors may "pass" in another year or two, but the memory of his experience leaves scars which, though they heal, remain as a permanent testimonial. By way of illustration, a university professor, now in his middle forties, offers these comments from his own experience:

I was a raw, inexperienced, naïve country boy of fifteen when my family moved to a large midwestern city. I must have been an impossible lad in

those days. Sometimes, when I lie awake at night, I squirm at the memories of those earlier years. I think I received in those crucial adolescent years a basic insecurity which I have never been able to overcome. Even today, when I stand at the window of my office and see the students flock to my classroom, I am almost overcome at times by my feelings of inferiority. It is as though my subconscious mind were saying: "If these young people knew how impossible you were as a lad, they wouldn't come to your classes." At times like that, I must struggle with myself to go to face my class.

Third, there are the problems of parent-child relationships. These are often similar to those arising in immigrant homes. The children live in a world which their parents do not understand, or only partly so, with the result that many of them are caught between an emotional allegiance to their families and an intellectual conclusion that their parents cannot help and do not understand. The conflicts that arise involve a variety of things—school needs, especially for extracurricular activities; clothing requirements, particularly for girls; social amenities, often over matters which to other families might seem highly trivial. If the parents are alert to the new cultural demands and are socially aggressive, the child may be "used" by the parents or be put under pressure to serve as a spearhead for the family's ambitions, or both. In other cases, country-reared parents tend to retain their rural conceptions, particularly in such matters as child rearing and their idea of what constitutes proper behavior norms for the children. Such parents are not haunted, as is so often the case with immigrant parents, by the idea that they are living in a new world and that they ought to modify their concepts by way of adjustment. American parents who move to cities stay in their own country, they insist that they know what its ways and needs are, and they often adhere stubbornly to their traditional views.

It should be realized, however, that the first-generation city child often presents special behavior problems. These arise basically from the anonymity that life in the city, particularly the big city, affords. To many such children, and at times to their parents, this anonymity seems like an invitation to run riot. Nobody knows and nobody seems to care. The restraining influences of the rural primary-group neighborhood are gone. All the facilities of communication combine to shift attention from the neighborhood to the larger, less choate, less exacting society. Reinforcing the effects of urban anonymity are the cynicism and tolerance that city life breeds. Urbanites tend to have few

illusions, and the resultant sinister sophistication is particularly evident to persons when they first come to know the city and before they understand its deeper values. When such cynicism is combined with an open-handed tolerance which seems to indicate a lack of standards rather than of mutual understanding, the isolated individual and family is likely to emerge, standing alone and thrown back upon the organic impulse of the individual. One obvious form of expression of this is pleasure seeking; and perhaps the clearest evidence of its prevalence is to be found in the rapid growth of commercialized amusements, in the excessive consumption of alcohol, and in other quests for stimulation and organic satisfactions which Sorokin characterizes as sensate culture. It is against this background that we must seek to understand the behavior problems of large groups of juveniles in such American cities as Detroit, for example, for it is in such cities that we find large groups of first-generation city children who have sloughed off their primary-group controls but have not yet developed substitute restraints.

#### CULTURAL CHANGE AND PARENT-CHILD RELATIONS

A third basic factor in the creation of marked cultural differentials between successive generations is to be found in the rapidity of cultural change which has characterized recent decades. Since this factor operates in all but a few isolated cultural pockets in this country, its significance is general, differing perhaps only in degree from one family to another.

The comprehensive and pervasive character of contemporary cultural change is so well established in sociological literature that no further emphasis or exposition is necessary here. We may proceed, therefore, to assess its specific meaning for the relationship between successive generations.

First, cultural change increases the cultural distance between successive generations. Since the time interval between generations is relatively fixed at about thirty years, the difference between the cultural milieus in which their personalities are formed depends wholly upon the rapidity with which cultural change occurs. Other things being equal, the more rapid the processes of cultural change, the greater the cultural distance between generations.

The significance of this for parent-child relations has been well stated by Davis.

Extremely rapid change in modern civilization, in contrast to most societies, tends to increase parent-youth conflict, for within a fast changing social order the time-interval between generations, ordinarily but a mere moment in the life of a social system, becomes historically significant, thereby creating a hiatus between one generation and the next. Inevitably, under such a condition, youth is reared in a milieu different from that of the parents, hence the parents become old-fashioned, youth rebellious, and clashes occur which, in the closely confined circle of the immediate family, generate sharp emotion. . . . Our rapid social change has crowded historical meaning into the family time span, has thereby given the offspring a different social context from that which the child acquired, and consequently has added to the already existent intrinsic differences between parent and youth, a set of extrinsic ones which double the chance of alienation. Moreover, our great social complexity, our evident cultural conflict, and our emphasis upon open competition for socioeconomic status have all added to this initial effect. . . . They have disorganized the improper relation of parental authority by confusing the goals of child control, setting up competing authorities, creating a small family system, making necessary certain significant choices at the time of adolescence, and leading to an absence of definite institutional mechanisms to symbolize and enforce the progressively changing stages of parental power.<sup>20</sup>

Another approach to the significance of cultural change in parent-youth relations is to consider its effect upon the respective roles in society of the old and the young. An interview given by the late Henry Ford at the time the Ford Motor Company shifted production from the old Model T Fords to a gearshift car offers an appropriate illustration of the point. When one makes radical and revolutionary changes in a plant, he said, old and experienced employees lose their value to the employer. Rather is it true that they prove to be a handicap, for old and experienced employees have set ideas and ways of doing things, which means that new, untried, and inexperienced workers can learn the newly devised ways much better and more quickly.

Cultural change, in other words, tends to depreciate the value of experience. It discredits precedents, traditional ideas, and techniques. The older person is at a disadvantage by reason both of what he must unlearn and of what he may not yet have mastered. The emphasis is upon experimentation, and a premium is put upon youth as being more versatile and adaptable. Old-fogeyism becomes a popular cry. Especially must current ideologies be revised by the young; and when, as in Nazi Germany, Soviet Russia, and possibly other countries, the

<sup>20</sup> Kingsley Davis, "The Sociology of Parent-Youth Conflict," *American Sociological Review*, August, 1940, pp. 523-535.

power and prestige of the state are placed behind these revisions, parents are to be obeyed only as long as they have the "correct" ideas.<sup>21</sup>

The experience of China through centuries of her history offers striking evidence of the foregoing in reverse. Lang has pointed out recently how the dependence upon agriculture, the importance of the public official, and the static nature of Chinese civilization all combined to strengthen the position of the elders. "The old man represented an accumulation of wisdom. The young man wanted to imitate him, not to fight him. For hundreds and thousands of years there was no conflict of generations in China."<sup>22</sup>

The current dislocation and reversal of the roles of old and young naturally come to a focus in family life. Children as always question their parents' understanding, only more so; what is particularly significant is the extent to which modern parents question their own capacities and judgments. In most societies, parents bring up their children in their own way of life, and the task is reasonably clear. But the contemporary parent succumbs not only to the confusion of rapid change but also to what might be called the great American fear of being naive. This is a current dread of upholding an old virtue or point of view or method of doing a thing, lest it imply that one does not know the new one, and large numbers of parents permit this to become an inferiority complex of the first magnitude. Living in a small immediate family, free from the domination of the elder kinsfolk, lacking authoritative sources of information other than the radio or the attractive young doctor down the street, looking askance and sidewise at the neighbors who are similarly confused, many a present-day parent feels nothing as much as uncertainty, a feeling which his children may sense before he is aware of it.

There are, of course, other families in which the situation takes a different turn. Here the parents adhere resolutely to old ways and values and seek to impose them upon their resistant offspring. At times, the very insecurity of the parents in a changing world leads to their compensatory devotion to the old, and then the conflicts are even more bitter. In many of these families, the cultural conflicts become involved with questions of family loyalty, the parents demanding loyalty not

<sup>21</sup> Sigmund Neumann, "The Conflict of Generations in Contemporary Europe from Versailles to Munich," *Vital Speeches of the Day*, August 1, 1939, pp. 623-628.

<sup>22</sup> Olga Lang, *Chinese Family and Society*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1946, p. 10.



only to themselves on the basis of family affection, but also to the attitudes, ideas, and values which they set up as part of the family pattern. Such situations often become painful and disturbing, especially to the children, and they result in internal conflicts between emotional loyalty and intellectual judgment. The further complications which may arise from the influence of the school and other formal educational agencies are obvious here but will be discussed in a subsequent chapter.

A final word should be said about the stabilizing role of the family in a period of rapid cultural change. It is easy, and it has been customary in certain quarters, to criticize parents for being old-fashioned and too resistant to new ideas in the school and youth culture of their children. Such an indictment, whatever its merit in any individual case, must be weighed against the family's responsibility as a conservator of old values and as a stabilizing force in a world in which so little remains true to itself through the space of a decade. After all, the mortality rate of new attitudes, ideas, and values is relatively high, perhaps as high as that of inventions in other fields; and a certain sheer resistance to change, quite apart from critical evaluation, seems both wholesome and essential. Moreover, there are things that are permanent. Courtship customs may be revolutionized by the automobile, and in turn by the airplane, but the way of a man with a maid has about it certain unchanging aspects. "There are values," Groves reminded us, "aside from those that come from human adjustment to mechanical processes or even to social organization. We sometimes call these spiritual values. The important thing is to recognize that they are basic in any program for human satisfaction. . . . In times of social flux the family becomes more than ever the final refuge for those who can find little sense of security elsewhere."<sup>23</sup>

#### CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND NATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

There is an extensive literature today, cutting across the fields of psychiatry and sociology, which emphasizes the neurotic quality of our culture.<sup>24</sup> The substance of this literature is that our culture is conflict-

<sup>23</sup> Ernest R. Groves, *The Family and Its Social Functions*, J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia, 1940, pp. 450-453.

<sup>24</sup> Karen Horney, *The Neurotic Personality of Our Time*, W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., New York, 1937; George Devereux, "Maladjustment and Social Neurosis," *American Sociological Review*, December, 1939, pp. 844-851; Read Bain, "Our Schizoid Culture," *Sociology and Social Research*, March, 1934, pp. 267-276; Lawrence Frank, "Society as the Patient," *American Journal of Sociology*, November, 1936, pp. 335-345.

ridden and conflict-laden, that the source of these conflicts is to be found in cultural contradictions in society, and that these take expression in the form of mental conflicts in the individual.

In the various analyses of the nature and sources of these cultural conflicts that have been presented, relatively little attention has been paid to culture conflicts in the personality development of children, and to the social forces which create these culture conflict situations on a large scale. The three factors emphasized in this chapter—(1) migration from an alien culture outside of the country in which one or one's parents lived, (2) migration from a different culture within a nation of continental proportions, and (3) constant cultural migration from one time span to another—would seem to affect the overwhelming proportion of people who have grown to maturity in the United States in recent years. In short, the cultural situations identified are operating on a large enough scale to produce characteristics national in scope. Similarly, the elements which produce neuroses are present in the situation described: cultural conflicts in early personality development, conflicts with family members over basic issues, opposing pulls of deep-seated loyalties, recurring frustration, and habitual response patterns of insecurity or rebellion or both.

Looming behind the whole process is the necessity for crucial choices by children whose deepest developmental interests deviate from those of their parents, choices whose inevitable solution involves the rejection, actual or symbolic, of their own nearest of kind. It is this which Margaret Mead implies in her phrase "the purposeful forgetting of ancestry," and in her insistence that Americans as a people are third-generation folk, i.e., newly arrived.<sup>25</sup> Perhaps this explains much about America and Americans—the outward glow of material and social achievement and the inward sense of loss that comes when the continuity of life is broken, for life seems to flourish best when its fundamental meaning is passed on through the subtle intangibles from one generation to another.

#### SUMMARY

1. A large proportion of children in the United States have grown up in homes in which there are marked cultural differences between parents and children.

<sup>25</sup> Margaret Mead, *And Keep Your Powder Dry*, William Morrow & Company, Inc., New York, 1943.

2. One group is the second-generation children in homes of immigrants. They constitute a large proportion of the child population and are congregated particularly in large cities. The cultural world in which they grow up differs materially from that of their Old World parents, giving rise to the resultant problems of culture conflict, parental inadequacy, undue social pressure, and family disorganization. Common response patterns include the child's rejection of his parents, the appearance of the marginal man, frustration coupled with aggressive behavior, and the crystallization of mental conflicts.

3. A second group consists of the large number of children who are being brought up in cities by parents reared in rural situations. The differences in background are cultural in nature and comprehensive in scope. The problems of many such children are similar in many respects to those of the second-generation immigrant group, except for the element of language differences.

4. Rapid cultural change tends to affect all families by lengthening the cultural distance between successive generations, thus creating problems of cultural differentials for additional groups of children, as well as intensifying those of the groups already mentioned.

5. These three groups of children tend to have similar problems of parent-child relationships, and naturally they tend to develop similar patterns of response. These apparently exist on a scale numerically large enough to affect prevailing national characteristics.

## School Situations and Child Development



It is customary to think of the school primarily as an agency in the formal education of the child, with the emphasis chiefly upon problems of curriculum, equipment, and pedagogy. Consideration of the child and the role of the school in his social development is, from this point of view, somewhat secondary and incidental to the main objectives of effectiveness in instruction. The purpose of this chapter is to emphasize the school as a complex of social situations in which children live, compete, perform, develop attitudes, form response patterns, fail and succeed in the process of getting along in the world. Such an approach has been neglected, relatively. In the study of behavior during the past generation, overwhelming importance has been attached to home situations; yet, at an early age the child is legally required to leave his home and, for as many as twelve years, is under a legal obligation of spending the major part of his waking hours in the world of school life. Moreover, this school world is for a large proportion of today's children quite different from their family world; it is a world which the parents may not understand and with which they often are in conflict.

More specifically, two aspects of the school world are to be emphasized. First, school life consists of a series of performance situations. More prosaically put, the school is a work place to which the child goes. He is paid to do so, both by the public treasury through its expenditures for school purposes, and by his parents through their maintenance of him. These payments, both direct and indirect, may be more than a subsequent employer will pay for some years. In this workaday world the child develops work behavior patterns; certain educators, particularly in foreign systems of education, have stressed this as the most important part of the educational process. In other words, it is not so important what he studies, as it is with what attitudes and

effectiveness the student learns to approach and execute his task.

In the second place, the school world is where much of the child's social life centers. Writing of Middletown, for example, the Lynds said: "The high school, with its athletics, clubs, sororities, fraternities, dances, parties and other 'extracurricular activities' is a fairly complete social cosmos in itself, and about this city within a city the social life of the intermediate generation centers. Here the social sifting devices of their elders—money, clothes, personal attractiveness, male physical prowess, exclusive clubs, elections to positions of leadership—are all for the first time set going."<sup>1</sup> In other words, school is where the child gains experience in social living for a number of years, learns to compete and to cooperate with his fellows, and develops habitual modes of response. Again, there are those who emphasize this aspect of the educational process, claiming that the child's social adjustment is of prior importance.

Obviously, there are many types of schools—day schools and boarding schools, public and private schools, grade schools and colleges, commercial and professional schools, each with its own characteristics. Waller, who has studied these differences, finds five characteristics which are common and which set schools apart as social unities. These are as follows: (1) They have a definite population; (2) they have a clearly defined social structure, arising from the mode of social interaction peculiar to the school; (3) they represent a compact network of social relationships; (4) they are pervaded by a we-feeling; and (5) they have a culture which is definitely their own.<sup>2</sup>

The main body of this chapter is devoted to a consideration of specific aspects or problems arising from these common characteristics. The topics to be discussed include: (1) the role of school life, particularly as suggested by autobiographical material; (2) problems of teacher personnel, including reference to the age, sex, marital status, mental hygiene, behavior emphases, and personality make-up; (3) characteristic factors in pupil relationships, such as the size, mobility, age composition, sex make-up, class distinctions, and cultural origins, in the school world; and (4) the nature of cultural differences between school and home.

<sup>1</sup> Robert and Helen Lynd, *Middletown*, Harcourt, Brace & Company, Inc., New York, 1929, p. 211.

<sup>2</sup> Willard W. Waller, *The Sociology of Teaching*, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, 1932, chap. 2.

SCHOOL LIFE IN RETROSPECT<sup>3</sup>

Recollections of school days found in twenty-one autobiographies high-light the crucial aspects of school to children who grew up to record its significance for themselves. One generalization is brought into clear focus by these records: although school was a place of lessons and grades and, more important, of teachers of varying personalities, it was, above all else, a place where these children had to live for long periods of time in a position of considerable and unprotected intimacy with their peers. The separate situations evolving from this aspect of school formed a significant portion of the autobiographers' memories of school days. Five of these situations will be discussed briefly.

1. To the writers, the most spectacular situation was first beginning school or changing to a new school. Though the circumstances of each situation varied, the common elements were these: (a) each one entered alone and unknown an unfamiliar group of children who looked at him objectively and estimatingly and put upon him the burden of gaining acceptance, a role, and a status; and (b) this was their first introduction to gaining these recognitions on their own merits and outside the family circle.

They found the following differences in rules and values that prepared them for participation in subsequent secondary groups. First, there was no such strong incentive to accepting a new classmate as there was to accepting a new family member. One could just as easily leave him alone. Augustus Long speaks of such treatment given to a classmate of his, a boy who was branded as rough and uncouth, but whose loneliness was what remained to haunt Long. He wrote that few things in life had shamed him as much, in remembering them, as his treatment of that boy.<sup>4</sup> Second, there was no such gratuitous conferring of roles as frequently occurs in family life. At school, the roles were earned realistically from observable behavior. Charles Sherrill, one-time ambassador to Turkey, for instance, still wore kilts and long curls when

<sup>3</sup> This section of Chapter XX has been contributed by Mrs. Eleanor S. Boll, Research Associate of the William T. Carter Foundation, University of Pennsylvania.

The school situations presented in this discussion are taken from twenty-one of a group of randomly selected autobiographies being analyzed for a study of family life.

<sup>4</sup> Augustus White Long, *Son of Carolina*, Duke University Press, Durham, 1939, pp. 93-95.

he started school. This, of course, made him a "sissy." He offered to fight to prove that he was a man, but fighting did not happen to be the way to prestige in his class. A man was one who kissed girls at recess time. Sherrill recognized that the rules for his success were new, laid down by his classmates. He had never kissed a girl, but he did so and thus became a man among men, though he had his mouth washed out by the teacher.<sup>5</sup> Third, once having a recognized role, one's status depended upon the value of that role in the eyes of the class, and this was often strikingly different from values previously taken for granted at home. When Marianne Oswald started school, she had a very deep voice, cultivated because her parents had wanted her to be a boy. Naturally, the girl was proud of her tomboy qualities. Nevertheless she learned through pinches and name calling that the boys in her class had no high opinion of deep-voiced, competitive tomboys. What they liked was shrill and frail femininity. The role with which she strove for success at home was destined to make her a social failure at school.<sup>6</sup> This status value of a certain role in a certain school was especially problem-creating among children who were half-grown and changed from one school to another. Some of them found the change so great that they *could* not fit into a role that would satisfy their former estimate of themselves. Lady Eleanor Smith describes her complete unhappiness at a school where she, an intellectual of a freely unconventional type, found herself in a group of pious little prigs. She never could win a worthy status for herself at that school because she would not be a prig. Relief from her plight came only when she changed to another school where she did not have to be convention-bound in order to be a proper person.<sup>7</sup> Brander Matthews mentioned this same problem in a school where only a fighting bully could achieve recognition. He did not rebel as did Lady Eleanor. He did a great deal of fighting in order to gain prestige, but the role was abhorrent to him, and he finally left the school.<sup>8</sup>

One further difficulty in gaining a place was that in many cases it

<sup>5</sup> Charles Hitchcock Sherrill, *My Story Book*, privately published, 1937, pp. 9-10.

<sup>6</sup> Marianne Oswald, *One Small Voice*, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., New York, 1945, pp. 12-15.

<sup>7</sup> Lady Eleanor Smith, *Life's a Circus*, Doubleday-Doran & Company, Inc., New York, 1940, pp. 72-81.

<sup>8</sup> Brander Matthews, *These Many Years*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1917, pp. 55-57.

had to be acquired in the face of organized bullying. For the boys this was chiefly physical; for the girls, psychological. For both it required great tenacity to escape humiliation.

This process of surviving and fitting in had to be carried on concurrently with learning the three R's, and was of far greater importance to the children. Under compulsory education a child cannot retreat from this situation except psychologically; nor under the public school system can it be solved by a free choice of schools. On the other hand, our present-day mobility forces many children to face this particular situation many times during their individual school careers.

2. A second school situation in the autobiographies emerged when, in the process of the children's living together at school, certain differences in background became apparent. One's classmates then began to be known as children of their parents. Carl Schleich wrote that at school he was reputed to be one of a gang of roughnecks. But there was a certain "zone of inviolable respect" between him and his schoolmasters because most of them were entertained at his parents' parties. At these same events, his friends were permitted to be present and to watch them. Roughneck or not, Carl was obviously someone to command respect.<sup>9</sup> Lady Eleanor knew that her behavior at a school would have forced her expulsion had not her father been Lord Chancellor.<sup>10</sup> At the other extreme, Marianne Oswald, who went through kindergarten with Kiki, the daughter of the family washwoman, as her best friend, found that Kiki could not go to private school with her even if the tuition was paid.<sup>11</sup> Henry Sedgwick told of pranks played upon a classmate whose family standards of changing his linen were very different from those of most of the class. The date would be secretly marked in pencil upon the boy's collar. The class would then watch to see how many days he wore that collar.<sup>12</sup>

Race and color were also part of this situation. Because Vambery was a Jewish boy, his teacher mocked him and advised him to stop school because he would be better off as a kosher butcher. This, Vambery said, was the prevailing tone at his school.<sup>13</sup> John Franklin Carter

<sup>9</sup> Carl Ludwig Schleich, *Those Were Good Days!* translated by Bernard Miall, W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., New York, 1936, p. 76.

<sup>10</sup> Smith, *op. cit.*

<sup>11</sup> Oswald, *op. cit.*

<sup>12</sup> Henry Dwight Sedgwick, *Memoirs of an Epicurean*, Bobbs-Merrill Company, Indianapolis, 1942, p. 54.

<sup>13</sup> Vambery Arminius, *The Story of My Struggles*, E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., New York, 1904, pp. 47-48.



revealed a similar situation from the other side of the window. He wrote that in his school there were a few Negro and Jewish children and that no one thought anything about it. But he added: "Father and Mother let us play with them all, regardless, but never encouraged us to invite them into the house."<sup>14</sup> This was no doubt a satisfactory solution for the little Carters, but the uninvited had their problems to solve. It is reasonable to suppose that the increased size of modern schools and the mixed population of most school districts have added to the number and, perhaps, the intensity of such situations.

3. A third situation of significance in the autobiographies was that of the immigrant boy entering an American school. The new element here was the immigrant's very real lack of the techniques with which to find his way into the group. John Cournoos, telling of his own experience, mentioned his three chief handicaps. His inexperience with the language set him back several grades; his "sylvan past" incapacitated him in the presence of crowds of children; his lack of familiarity with the play customs of his classmates and his desire to adopt them got him into trouble. He frankly did not know such things as under what conditions it was comradely to call a boy a son-of-a-bitch and when it was insulting.<sup>15</sup> This lack of techniques must characterize the school situations not only of immigrant children, but also of second- and third-generation youngsters who have lived within their parents' culture circles and then been sent to a big city school.

4. Another situation brought out in the life histories was that of the protectively reared and rather sensitive child being awakened to certain crudities of life as they will appear in school. Edgar Lee Masters loathed his first days at school. He wrote: "The schoolroom had no proper ventilation, the air that we breathed was full of offense. The toilets were foul beyond description; the first day at school I learned all the obscene words that were then current."<sup>16</sup> John Carter's sensibilities were attacked in the same way. "The school," he said, "was, physically, a dreadfully depressing place. The sanitary arrangements were neglected and the boys' room was distinguished by a large pool in the center of the asphalt floor while the traditional method of attending to the needs

<sup>14</sup> John Franklin Carter, *The Rectory Family*, Coward-McCann, Inc., New York, 1937, pp. 154-156.

<sup>15</sup> John Cournoos, *Autobiography*, G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1935, pp. 69-71.

<sup>16</sup> Edgar Lee Masters, *Across Spoon River*, Farrar & Rinehart, Inc., New York, 1936, pp. 26-27.

of nature was to stand on the seat and contribute to the little lake. There was a certain amount of competition in this line and altogether it was a liberal education in the ways of the world to boys who had been reared to open plumbing."<sup>17</sup> Cournos was appalled at the ribaldry of the boys when speaking of girls. It was beyond his nature and experience even to speak aloud of a girl as having fine legs.<sup>18</sup> Masters' and Carter's descriptions may sound to the uninitiated like conditions pre-dating modern public-school buildings and corrected in them. That this is not always the case many a school teacher can testify. Ribaldry, it is common knowledge, runs riot among certain groups in most schools. Avoidance of or adjustment to this situation must be an issue for children who are "protected" and fastidious but who want to be "one of the gang." To all of them it is an "education."

5. A final situation described by the writers was the classroom as a little world of romance. Most of these schools were coeducational, but romance flourished even in those where the sexes were separated in classes. All sorts of individual results followed these young but intense affairs. Cournos adored the fair sex, but was unable to court girls and felt quite frustrated. The very presence of a girl made him speechless. Yet, when he fell in love with a young teacher who could unembarrass him, he discovered that the eternal feminine "had its practical as well as spiritual uses." He found pleasure in his work and did it properly.<sup>19</sup> Masters improved his spelling because of the affection between him and a teacher. At the same time he developed a kind of "amorous madness" for a schoolmate.<sup>20</sup> More complicated relationships of love and rivalry were described. Leonard Feeney was caught in the current of one of these when Alicia, the class belle, broke a bottle of ink on the floor. A brave boy told the teacher he had done it, and before the whole class he took Alicia's punishment. Leonard watched in misery—if he had thought of it, he could have done this brave thing. He had learned a lesson in chivalry, but he was afraid there might be no "next time."<sup>21</sup> Love complications existed among the girls too. Marianne Oswald had looked with favor on André even before she came to school. But André preferred Yvonne and was insulting to Marianne. She was humbled—

<sup>17</sup> Carter, *op. cit.*, p. 154.

<sup>18</sup> Cournos, *op. cit.*

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> Masters, *op. cit.*

<sup>21</sup> Leonard Feeney, *Survival Till Seventeen*, Sheed & Ward, Inc., New York, 1941, pp. 75-77.

until Roger began championing her. Roger had been reared in *Paris* and was no ordinary mortal. Thus Marianne's unrequited love found consolation and her stock in herself went up in value.<sup>22</sup> This is the complicated world of classroom romance at the kindergarten level, where success, or the lack of it, can be just as important to children, for the moment, as more mature affairs are to adults.

In summation, these writers pictured themselves as confronted in school with a number of social problem situations which were serious, important, and some of them momentarily all-absorbing. Their happiness in their school life depended largely upon their individual adjustment to these situations. Furthermore, success or the lack of it correlated with their adjustment to academic learning. The stories showed that unhappiness in school relationships went hand in hand with failure or with the overcompensation of retreat into precocious academic attainments; satisfaction seemed for some to facilitate success in schoolwork, and for others it helped to place academic honors in a position of relative value. Finally, these school experiences in social relationships were an early training for the similar experiences which all adults meet. These children were experimenting early, and under classroom conditions, with the techniques which they might use as permanent tools in all their social relationships.

#### TEACHER PERSONNEL IN SCHOOL SITUATIONS

Teachers constitute a small but important part of the school population. They represent the institutional type of leadership functioning in the school situation.<sup>23</sup> They have a directive and supervisory responsibility. In the performance aspects of the school world, they set the tasks and direct their execution. In addition, they play various roles in the social life of the school. Often a personalized relationship develops between an individual teacher and child. In short, the teacher not only is concerned with the intellectual life of the child, but often carries a major responsibility in his socialization, playing the role of disciplinarian, counselor, confidant, and friend. To say that the teacher is often identified as a foe by the child is to comment upon the tone but not the roles of the teacher-child relationship. It is apparent, therefore, that

<sup>22</sup> Oswald, *op. cit.*

<sup>23</sup> For an excellent discussion of the teacher viewed as an institutional type of leader, read Waller, *op. cit.*, chap. 14.

a number of facts about teachers in addition to their scholastic equipment and pedagogical effectiveness become significant in the school world, especially from the standpoint of the child.

1. First is the age of the teacher, the significance of which is difficult to assess, because both of the variables which must be considered and of the intangible nature of the evidence that is available. Obviously, the teacher's age is more than a chronological measurement, it involves more particularly poise, social experience, the maturing of understanding and judgment, the attitude toward children, and the manner in which one has adjusted to his age. The behavior of young teachers who grow beards and act stilted, and of those past fifty who insist on gamboling on the green, constitutes part of the age complex.

Perhaps the age of the teacher has meaning primarily when compared with that of his pupils, the age differential being an index of the personality-cultural distance between the two. This distance seems a highly significant factor, both in pupil-teacher relationships, and in determining the particular role played by the teacher in the school situation. When he is relatively near his students in age, he has the advantage of understanding better their cultural world and its problems, but he runs the danger of becoming too vitally interested in their activities and longing too intensely to participate in them. This frequently creates two types of problems. First, in becoming too friendly and perhaps familiar with his students, he is confronted with the problem of reconciling friendship with authority, and he often ends up by losing both. Second, if frustrated in his longing to participate actively in student life, the compensatory developments may take the form of "hard marking," a "tough attitude," or other unsympathetic manifestations.

Older teachers, by way of contrast, often have more difficulty in putting themselves in the place of students, and in sympathizing with the vagaries of behavior characteristic of the earlier years. On the other hand, older teachers seem more able to sublimate their own interests and ambitions in the development of their pupils, and to secure more easily their subordination because their students accept the teacher as a parent-substitute. The combination of these two sets of results creates the paradoxical problem peculiar to the teacher whose age separates him too far from his students: he has authority but little or no influence. The student's reaction to this situation is that he accepts the former fact while concealing the latter. The most effective age differential, ac-

according to Waller, exists when the teacher is a young adult, sufficiently past adolescence to have solved its problems, yet still near enough to be understanding and tolerant of its challenge for others; old enough not to see the student as a rival but young enough to speak his language; old enough to be identified as an adult but not so old as to cease to have, for the student, the status of being a person.<sup>24</sup>

2. Similarly significant is the sex of the teacher. Mention of this factor precipitates a whole series of questions: How does the almost exclusive dominance of teaching below the high-school level by women affect the behavior of girl students? Of boy students? How does it influence the performance levels which are established? How does it affect the students' attitude toward the school process? What is its meaning for teacher-pupil relationships? How do men and women teachers differ in their conceptions of what constitute disciplinary problems and how they should be handled? The answers to these questions go both to the heart of child, and subsequently of national, development; the scientific evidence bearing upon them is sparse indeed, as have been efforts to find evidence of this nature.

The significance of the teacher's sex for teacher-pupil relationships is perhaps the most obvious aspect. Rapport between pupil and teacher, based on cross-sex attraction, is both frequent and normal. Perhaps most often this is a one-way process. the high-school girl is secretly in love with her history teacher, or the spinster teacher develops a "special relationship" with one of "her boys." Since the mores of the scholastic world frown upon any affectional interchange between teachers and students, such tendencies are usually suppressed or disguised. Surface manifestations take various oblique forms. The girl student tries to "work" her male teacher for high grades, extra privileges, special tutoring, or conferences concerning her personal problems; an interested teacher may show off before the love object, lean over backward with extra harsh treatment, or express his affection in more pathological forms. Problems of homosexuality also arise, precipitating a patent silliness of behavior which destroys the teacher's effectiveness as both teacher and person, leads to a favoritism which is destructive of school discipline, or stimulates among students a diversion of normal trends into unwholesome channels. In summary, it is not too much to say that the atmosphere of many a schoolroom is charged with undercurrents of a sex attraction between teacher and pupils, sometimes with the

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 216.

resultant zest of added charm and interest, in other cases with the disruptive force of a vague unrest.

The sex of the teacher takes on added importance at times in view of the nationality background of the student population. Women teachers, for example, often have additional disciplinary problems with male students who come, as do the Italians for instance, from homes where the tradition of male dominance is very strong. Among such groups there is usually the complementary tradition that the mother is to be loved but not necessarily obeyed. It is the father who is to be feared and obeyed. The projection of early family-conditioned attitudes on to the teacher has been noted by many students of behavior, and the point emphasized here is merely a further elaboration of that fact. Perhaps the basic principle which should be stressed is that every distinct cultural group has its traditional conception of the respective roles of the father and the mother as disciplinarians, and that when these are transferred to the school world they become significant when related to the sex of the teacher.

Possibly the most important problem involving the teacher's sex is the effect of the relative dominance of the educational process by women during the child's early and presumably the significantly formative years. There is widespread belief that this country has been experiencing a feminization of its culture in recent years, and that a very specific phase of this has been the feminization of child training.<sup>25</sup> Three factors may be identified in this connection. First is the fact that the modern father is away from home a large part of the child's waking day, thus leaving the responsibility for rearing him to his mother, or a woman substitute. Second is women's monopolization of the teaching process, especially below the high-school level. Third is the fact that many of the functions performed earlier by the family, in which the father presumably had some share, are now delegated to social agencies of various kinds, staffed chiefly by women. In combination, these factors are interpreted to mean that women's dominance of the child-conditioning process is constant and pervasive—in the home, in the school, in many child and youth activities—and that, as a result, women determine not only the child's ways but also his attitudes, ideals, values, and, by indirection, his conception of what it is to be masculine.

3. The marital status of the teacher has significance for the present

<sup>25</sup> Roy Helton, "The Inner Threat: Our Own Softness," *Harper's Magazine*, September, 1940, pp. 337-343.

discussion in a variety of ways. To begin with, it determines his status in the school world, particularly among students who have reached the adolescent stage. The teacher who is married, particularly if a woman, is one who has "made it"; the unmarried one has failed. To girl students, the latter personifies what is to be avoided; for school boys, the unmarried woman teacher retains some elements of intrigue only up to a certain age. From the teacher's status it is only a short step to the attitude toward what he teaches.

Reinforcing his status in the school world is the teacher's status in the adult (parent, community, etc.) world. Here, too, marital status is important. "Old-maid schoolteacher" has long been used by parents as a special weapon with which to disparage a teacher and thus dispose of what the child is expected to do in school or bring to it. Teachers have unusually difficult problems in many communities in acquiring a normal status, and the marital status may easily tip the scale in either direction.<sup>26</sup>

Marital status is related to the personality of the teacher. Without inferring in any way that married teachers are well-adjusted persons and unmarried ones are not, it would seem that being married or not often does contribute to the difference between a sense of inner tension and tranquillity, between a sense of fulfillment and frustration. Unmarried teachers often sublimate by means of their professional interests and become highly effective teachers; others fail to hide in their work the evidences of a thwarted love and sex life.

On the other hand, marriage, especially for women teachers, presents its own handicaps. These arise chiefly from the extra responsibilities which marriage involves. Many a married woman teacher, in addition to being a full-time teacher, is trying to manage a home, be a wife, and possibly rear children of her own. To say that she may fail in one or more of these tasks, or may age prematurely, is merely to allude to the inevitable. Furthermore, if she fails with her own children or her husband or her household management, she may lose prestige in the school world or in the community, or in both.

The teacher's marital status is related, too, to the sex problems of the school world. The married teacher may be less actively involved in the cross-sex attractions of the classroom; he may show a less vicarious interest in the romantic activities of the students, a greater tolerance

<sup>26</sup> James H. S. Bossard, "Marriage as a Status Achieving Device," *Sociology and Social Research*, September-October, 1944, pp. 3-10.

toward the "puppy love" stage, and a better understanding of the students' sex problems. Unmarried teachers at times seek to impose upon their students the attitudes and values in the relationship between the sexes which have grown out of their own bitter frustrations. It is only fair to add, however, that the reverse of all this also appears in comparing married and unmarried teachers. Marital status is but one of many facts which are important in understanding the teacher and his role in the school world.

4. The mental hygiene of the teacher has received considerable stress in the mental hygiene literature of recent years, with reference primarily to the importance of the teacher's mental adjustment as a factor in determining the mental health of the pupil. Two phases of these discussions will be summarized briefly.

First, frequent reference is made to the large number of teachers who are not in good mental health and who give ample evidence of the fact in their relations with their students. To account for this, some of the motives are mentioned which lead people to enter the teaching profession, such as an escape (for women) from unpleasant home conditions, a refuge from the rigors of other occupations, the desire to dominate situations (made possible by working with younger persons), or a form of sublimation of a desire for children; but due recognition is given to the repressive pressures which society tends to exert upon the teacher. He is expected all too often to be a repressed person, a paragon of virtues, by a community that is seeking freedom from its own unconscious guilt.<sup>27</sup> Nothing is said about the role of nervous fatigue in a profession in which the emphasis is upon the output of nervous energy but where the length of the working day is still measured in terms of ordinary manual labor.

Second, there is the role of the teacher in creating the mental attitudes of the students. Teachers dominate the child's work requirements, and thus may become a major factor in determining whether the child develops ennui over set tasks, boredom with meaningless content, intellectual satiety, and a distaste for thinking, or vitalizing drives exactly opposite in character. It is significant to note how frequently students with fine records of achievement, both in school and afterward, attribute their records to the motivation given by an outstanding teacher.

<sup>27</sup> P. M. Symonds, "Personality Adjustment of Women Teachers," *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, January, 1941, pp. 14-20.



Perhaps more pervasive and important are the subtle and intangible mental hygiene characteristics of the teacher which affect the atmosphere of the school. These include his morale, feelings of anxiety, worries, demeanor, voice, poise, tension, feelings of security, and relations with other teachers. Mental hygiene may be as airborne as are certain communicable diseases. Certainly the atmosphere of the home has been much emphasized in psychiatric literature; it seems equally important as an attribute of the school.<sup>28</sup>

5. Since no other professional group comes into close touch with children so frequently and for so long a time as does the teacher, what he identifies as behavior problems, and how those problems are handled by teachers, become of the highest importance.

The teacher's conception of behavior problems, in special contrast to that of mental hygienists, was the subject of a widely publicized study a number of years ago. Teachers in several large elementary public-school systems were asked: (a) to list the behavior problems they had encountered in their experience, (b) to check the frequency of the problems listed, (c) to rate the total behavior adjustment of each child, and (d) to rate the relative seriousness of the various problems.<sup>29</sup> According to this study: (a) Teachers tended to stress behavior disturbances that threatened their standard of morality, obedience, orderliness, and application to schoolwork. On the whole, they seemed to be mostly concerned with the stubborn, disorderly, irresponsible, untruthful, and disobedient child. (b) The problems reported most frequently were those involving violations of specific classroom rules and the children's failure to meet prescribed standards of schoolwork. (c) The problem child, as identified by them, was antagonistic to authority, did not conform to classroom order and routine, did not make the expected application to prescribed school tasks, and violated standards of integrity. On the other hand, the purely personal problems of children which did not frustrate the immediate purposes of teaching were not regarded as symptomatic of significant maladjustment. (d) The ratings of the relative seriousness of behavior problems, by the teachers and the mental hygienists, were strikingly different. Teachers ranked as most serious the problems relating to sex, dishonesty, and disobedience, and as least serious such traits as shyness, sensitiveness, unsocialness, fear-

<sup>28</sup> Garry C. Myers, "The Present Crisis and the Mental Health of the School Child, *Mental Hygiene*, April, 1934, pp. 294-298.

<sup>29</sup> E. K. Wickman, *Children's Behavior and Teachers' Attitudes*, Commonwealth Fund, New York, 6th printing, 1937.

fulness, and dreaminess. This latter group, together with unhappiness, depression, resentfulness, cowardliness, and overcriticalness, was at the top of the mental hygienists' list. The items describing defiance to authority appear to teachers to be very serious; they are near the bottom of the psychiatric rating. Problems designating the failure of pupils to uphold classroom discipline were emphasized by teachers but greatly discounted by the psychiatrists, who rated them as the least serious of all. In short, teachers react mostly to the attacking, frustrating forms of behavior problems, counterattacking in turn; their response to the withdrawing forms of behavior is sympathy and protective feelings aroused by the dependence and inadequacy of the pupils.

This study has been utilized widely to discredit teacher handling of behavior problems. Granted certain assumptions implicit in the study, this may seem justifiable. A counter line of argument, however, might be presented. Obviously, psychiatrists as well as teachers present a rating which is the product of *their* experience. This may be the larger fact revealed. Each group tends to emphasize the traits which seem important to its respective professional approach. Each is dealing with the realities of its task. Furthermore, what assurance is there for the independent student that the frustrated, attacking type of behavior, identified by the teacher, is less significant in the complex life of the modern industrial-urban order, than the retiring, withdrawing type? The point is at least debatable.

Teachers naturally vary a great deal in the ways in which they deal with behavior problems, and certain aspects of the differing approaches are particularly important. Close attention to the comments of children concerning their teachers indicates that fairness and reasonableness are emphasized more than most aspects, some teachers being constantly criticized on this score, and others seldom if at all. The following three short case documents illustrate teachers' methods of dealing with behavior:<sup>30</sup>

I sat very quietly at my table while the children came to me for morning inspection. The last pupil in line was Dorothy, a Negro girl. As she was a new student, I had to inquire into her social and health background. During the interview, she gave vent to the hurts and heart burnings that had been swelling up within her since her enrollment at our school. I made no attempt to check her as she denounced the unfairness of everyone at the school. Finally, she turned on me and said with a depth of feeling that we

<sup>30</sup> From the files of the William T. Carter Foundation, University of Pennsylvania.

rarely see in children, "And how would you feel if they called you nigger, even if you was one?"

I was stirred at the unnecessary burdens that she had been bearing. I was sure the woman for whom Dorothy's mother worked knew nothing of the race problem that she had unfortunately created. However, I suppose Dorothy had to be sent to school, and ours was the nearest and most convenient for her to reach. Dorothy stood watching me closely; so I humbly assured her that I was humiliated that any of our children talked that way to anyone. Triumphantly she said, "That's the way everybody here talks."

I was distressed. I knew she was mistaken, but how could I get her to see the real attitude of the majority?

"I am sorry. I had thought that Mary Alice was always nice to everyone," I said quietly.

"Well, I live at Mary Alice's house, and she is a lady. She always treats me well."

I gathered hope. I asked how others treated her. She admitted that Mary Alice was not the only one who treated her well. We began to make lists of those who treated her well and those who did not. I asked her to count the names on each list. The number of those who had been nice to her was greater than the number of those who had not. Then, I remembered her statement that some of the children were not nice to me, refusing to do what I asked them at the morning inspection. So, we made out lists of those who were cooperative with me.

Then, I had a real inspiration. I suggested to her that some children were more cooperative than others. We compared all the lists we had made. The appreciative ones in my list tallied with hers.

The scowl disappeared from her dark face. Gone was the hostile feeling that made her stand at the other side of the room. Instead, there was a happy smile as she stood by my chair and scanned the lists we had prepared.

Then she added a bit of philosophy that many a member of a minority race has had to assume, "Miss Smith, some folks is just trash, ain't they?"

I knew I hadn't solved her problem, but that she had a lifetime of adjusting and accepting ahead of her because she was a member of a minority group. But I hope I helped her somewhat to face the many problems she will meet.

Marian (aged twelve) says that Donald is the worst boy in school. But this is not really his fault. When he was four, his mother died. He loved her very much. After she died, Donald had no one to wash him and dress him properly to come to school. The other children say that he was dirty, and not neat, and that he smells. So they said nasty things to him and he said nasty things back to them. Now Donald's father has married again. He hates his stepmother. And she hates him, too. She fights with him in the morning before he comes to school, so Donald is cross when he comes, and he says ugly things to us, and then we say them back.

Donald is very good in science, and a man wrote a letter to the teacher

when Donald was in 7th grade saying that he might be a great scientist one day. Then Mr. Hart said that greatness was only slightly different from insanity and laughed. This afternoon, I found Donald sitting alone in school, crying. He said he was worried because he was afraid that he would be crazy when he was older, and that the teacher had said that he would. I don't think that Mr. Hart showed good sense. So Jane and I have decided Donald needs a friend and that we will be nice to him.

Katharine, now 35 years of age, still recalls vividly her first days in the sixth grade of a fashionable private school. She says: My first uncomfortable day at school was the one on which I entered Lower Knollcrest School in the sixth grade. Although there was actually no headmistress of the Lower School, the French teacher, Mademoiselle Jeanne, had taken that role upon herself and ruled the school like a dictator.

Mademoiselle Jeanne was angry with me to begin with. I had had to take placement examinations upon entering the school, and she had found my French so faulty that she felt I should be retarded two grades. My mother refused to enter me if that was done. All my other grades were satisfactory and she felt that French was not so important that I could not get ahead with it if I worked hard. In the face of Mother's intransigence, Mademoiselle ungracefully gave in and retarded me but one grade.

At the opening, however, of my first French class, Mademoiselle immediately called my name and asked me to stand in front of the class and read a passage from a French novel. I did so, thinking I was pretty smart because I had had French since first grade. In the middle of the passage, she literally snatched the book out of my hand, told me to remain where I was, and called upon a girl named Martha Toland to come and read the passage. The beautifully flowing French that rolled off Martha's tongue sounded like a new language to me. I had never heard French like that before. As Martha finished reading, Mademoiselle said, "*That is the way we read French at Knollcrest.*" We took our seats and during the rest of the period girls were called to the front of the room, one after another, to read aloud, the performance of each of them being equal to Martha's. I felt quite desperate. I did not see how I could ever make my tongue conform to that kind of French and felt doomed to failure for the first time in my life.

At recess time Martha Toland and Grace Pepper drew me aside. They explained to me that this was an initiation ceremony visited upon many newcomers by Mademoiselle. Every girl who had been called upon to read, except me, had been raised from infancy by a French governess and had grown up as a true bilingual. There were many girls in the school, they said, whose French pronunciation was not even so good as mine.

Hope revived. I had always been good friends with my teachers, and considered on equal terms with my classmates, and I intended to stay that way. I determined to work hard enough to justify my existence in Mademoiselle's eyes. I was still completely ignorant that her prejudice against me was based upon something much more fundamental than my pronunciation of French.

I got my first understanding of the real situation in this way. Certain periods of each week were devoted entirely to French grammar. We had written quizzes, marked our neighbor's paper, counted errors, and then were lined up in order of the number of our errors, so that we, and everyone else, might see just where we stood in relation to each other. It so happened that the girls who spoke French fluently were very intolerant of the rules of grammar in its most spectacular subjunctive phases. They could speak French—so what? I, on the other hand, dug into my grammar to save my life and reputation. I crept up steadily in the grammar line, unnoticed, until one day I found myself, triumphant, ahead of Martha Toland. Mademoiselle found me there, too. Her reaction shocked me speechless. In a very real French temper, she delivered a tirade upon Martha—for letting a Jones get ahead of a Toland! That put into very direct words what the battle was all about and I saw that it was not one to be waged by being a good girl and studying one's lessons.

6. Much of the preceding discussion is related to the problem of the personality make-up of the teacher. Undoubtedly, this is as basic a factor in his success as is his professional equipment. Granted this, however, the personality traits necessary for successful teaching and teacher-pupil relationships have as yet not been wholly determined.<sup>81</sup> Perhaps agreement on the following points might be generally obtained: (a) professional zeal and confidence, (b) a sense of self-assurance and self-confidence, (c) ability to accept criticism and opposition, (d) ability to treat students calmly and impartially, (e) a sense of humor sufficient to prevent taking oneself too seriously, (f) some objective understanding of oneself and others, and (g) an adequate adjustment to the realities of life. "The teacher," says Orgel, "must be so stabilized that she will not suffer a nervous collapse when she finds some obscene note a student has written. She must appreciate the fact that stealing, lying, truancy, and other asocial types of conduct are not evidences of moral degradation; they are symptoms that occur in the life of many children."<sup>82</sup>

Perhaps as significant as any factor is the objectivity of the teacher's attitude toward the pupil. This has been well stated by Glueck:

One of the outstanding conditions which determine success or failure in child-teacher relationships has to do with the question of objectivity of attitude and behavior. Ordinarily, we are apt to be more rational in our relations with our fellows, the more successful we are in maintaining an

<sup>81</sup> Harry M. Rivlin, "The Personality Problems of Teachers," *Mental Hygiene*, July, 1939, pp. 12-24.

<sup>82</sup> Samuel Z. Orgel, "Bringing Up Children," *Mental Hygiene*, July, 1937, pp. 438-439.

attitude of objectivity. By this attitude we simply mean the ability to see things as they actually are, and to deal with them on that basis. The opposite of this is the tendency to color and distort events and things in accordance with the particular bias we may be entertaining at the time by projecting onto them our personal feelings.<sup>83</sup>

Such distortions come not only from the emotional bias of an unstable personality; they may be the result of devotion to a pedagogical cult which worships the theory of some noted educator, or be the unconscious product of a religious creed. An illustration of the latter is found in Fred's case:

Fred is ten years old. He has had a serious attack of pneumonia. The effects of the illness, and of the high-powered medicines used by the doctors, have left him very nervous and given to semi-hysterical outbreaks at home. After four weeks, his parents decide he should return to the small Friends School where he is a student. The day before he returns, the parents visit the school and explain the situation to the teacher, carefully avoiding, however, any request for special treatment of Fred. The teacher, a member of the Society of Friends, interprets her religion to mean that all persons are equal, and all children are to be treated equally. Upon Fred's return to school, the teacher makes it a point to require, not only all that is expected of the other children, but a trifle more, lest anyone think that Fred is not treated as is every other child.

#### PUPIL RELATIONSHIPS IN THE SCHOOL WORLD

Turning to the school world as it exists and operates primarily among the pupil personnel, the reader is asked to recall that this school world is a social world relatively complete in itself, with its own population, social structure, network of social relationships, culture, and group consciousness. Out of these characteristics arise a variety of factors which affect this social world as a milieu for child development. A selected number of these factors will receive brief consideration.

1. The size of the school world, both the pupil's class and the student body as a whole, is important in a number of ways, for it involves the impact of numbers upon the individual. The present-day problem is one chiefly of very large classes and schools. One result of this is that teachers and administrators become increasingly concerned with problems of discipline instead of teaching. Large numbers multiply contacts and thus problems of relationships, as well as create vague fears that situations may get out of hand. Many teachers in large schools seem haunted by an almost neurotic fear of student disturbances. The effect

<sup>83</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 439.

of large groups upon the social development of an individual member is a problem which has not been adequately studied or, may it be added, recognized as a problem. Common observation reveals many difficulties among individual students who are lost in the maze of the mass. It is far from easy for a twelve-year-old to develop poise, self-assurance, and self-esteem when he finds himself identified as the eighth boy in the ninth row in Section 29 in a junior high school with a total of 1300 students. The establishment of intimate personal relationships with students or teacher presents special difficulties. Moreover, the size of the school world takes on added significance when compared with the size of the child's family world. Whereas formerly a child came from a large family group, along with a number of other siblings, and entered a small school, the contemporary child tends to come from a small family, often alone, and to enter a very large school world. This change in the background of millions of children may prove, in retrospect, to be of revolutionary significance.

Older students constantly emphasize to the author the role of an alphabetical seating order in connection with large classes. The child sitting in the front row is relatively conspicuous. The teacher comes to know him, and other students see him. There are additional stimuli for him to be attentive, since he expects to be called upon to recite more frequently. In contrast, the child in the last row is inclined to take a chance; possibly he cannot hear as well; what the teacher is doing and saying is less vivid. If he can be inconspicuous enough, he may be called upon less often to recite. The significance of seating order, whatever it may be proved to be in the school world, may be contrasted with its role in a military training camp. The rookie in the front row is spotted by the sergeant who learns the rookie's name, and life may be anything but a bed of roses for him from then on.

2. The mobility of the school population has been referred to in general terms in Chapter XVII. Obviously, its effects intensify many of the problems appearing in large, impersonal school systems, as well as create additional ones. The following, written by a Negro teacher in a Negro school in a large city, reveals vividly some of the implications of student mobility.

In the early days of my teaching experience, I gave no thought to the problems of student mobility. Rather, I could never understand why I became a referee from the time I entered school until the time I left. And believe you me—in those days they were real fights. I had one boy in par-

ticular that I remember. One hundred and eighty pounds, six feet tall, a former inmate of a corrective institution, a veteran discharged from the Great Lakes Training center because of his tender years, and an amateur prize fighter of some note in an outstanding Athletic club in \_\_\_\_\_.

The same 8B class included the captain, lieutenant and several privates of the Safety Patrol. They kept fighting in the school yard down to a minimum and kept the late lines passing orderly—even if they did add a little vice to this legitimate business. By the way, the vice connected with the Safety Patrol business was a system of protection from any one who wishes to fight you—just pay the captain or his trustees 5 to 50¢ per week, and they would fight all your battles for you. And believe it or not, the pupils engaged in this business, once we had come to understand each other, were actually most lovable chaps. Even now when I see them occasionally, they tip their hats, wave to me at a distance, and periodically drop in school to let me know how they are getting along.

The girls in this class presented the same problem. They were always bickering among themselves. A newcomer whether male or female was always cause for a new battle, and as newcomers were frequent, this new teacher, meaning myself, usually slept from 6 P.M. straight through until 7 A.M. for the first month of service at this school.

To aid further in this quest for understanding my pupils, I began to consider this problem: Do children coming into a new school situation adjust readily? Most adults are of the opinion that children fit in anywhere with great ease. My general experience in the classroom is that when a new student enters, the pupil is usually the object of much curiosity, teasing, and maltreatment. If the new pupil reacts like a spineless jellyfish to this treatment, which includes physical abuse that may be slight or intense depending upon the emotions of the class, there is no serious difficulty other than convincing the members of the class that they are being cruel to this tearful, unhappy child. But if the new pupil reacts like the normal child an argument follows which is usually ensued by a fight. The fight may take place inside or outside of the school. In any case it is usually referred back again to the school for a solution.

These fights may range from the classroom bout, where both parties will stop upon request of the teacher, or the parties may be so angered that they literally must be taken away from each other. At this stage any dangerous weapon may be used. This usually happens at the urgings of an onlooker, or onlookers, to the losing party. These weapons may even be passed to the losing party as most parents do not allow their children to carry anything dangerous upon their person. Outside fights are apt to be more tragic, since onlooking grownups do not seem to stop fights until they are actually sure that someone will be hurt.

New students do not precipitate in all school systems an invitation to physical combat. Student interaction is a form of social interaction which is learned, and this differs from one school population to an-



other. Perhaps the fundamental fact to be stressed is that mobility multiplies and intensifies the problems of adjustment of individual pupils to their school world. How change from one school to another operates at an upper-class level may be seen in the case of Virginia, as summarized by a trained student of personality problems who shared much of Virginia's life.

Virginia went to the Ames School for Girls from her first through her eighth grades, at which time the headmistress who was admired by the entire community retired, and a new and modern regime took over the school. Virginia was then shifted, at the beginning of her high school career, to Bates School.

There were at least four differences between these two schools that helped to produce an entirely new social situation for Virginia. First, the Bates School was much larger than Ames. Supervision of individual students was almost nil compared with the watchfulness of Miss Bently at Ames, where the small size of the student body and of the physical limits of the school made it almost impossible for a student to be unobserved by a teacher at any moment. Ames was like a large family with Mother ever-present. Bates was like a small city in comparison. Virginia was thus presented for the first time with the responsibility for her own behavior in school, and the possibility of "getting away with something." The second difference was that the academic standard at Bates was much higher than at Ames. At the latter school, learning to be a lady was the prime requisite, and the winds of academic symbols were gently tempered on the report cards of little ladies of light-weight intellect. At Bates one stood or fell by the letters on one's quiz books. Virginia, who had early learned the outward trappings of ladyhood, was always on the "Honor Roll" at Ames. That was the status she was used to and the picture she had of herself—a well-mannered little lady who was always on the "Honor Roll." At Bates she trailed the class, and the pathos of that lay in the fact that though it hurt her pride and she tried to work hard, she had to face for the first time the reality that, academically, she could not keep pace, and could never again be a member of the "Honor Roll Elite" to which group she was accustomed to belonging. A third difference in the schools was in the teaching staff. About 50 per cent of the teachers at Bates were men. Virginia had never had a man teacher before. She had no men in her home. She was terrified of the men teachers and did not know how to converse or behave with them. In their classes she could not function even at her own best level and she got a reputation from them as a stupid, silly sort of little girl who could not answer questions and did not care. And the fourth difference was boys. In all her life, Virginia had never been within tickling distance of a boy of her own age. At Bates School her classes were full of them. Furthermore, she was the "new" girl. The boys' eyes were upon her, and they found her fair. She was light-hearted, light-headed, fifteen, and extremely pretty.

The combination of these changes in Virginia's school life had results

which nearly ended in her being asked to leave the school, and which put her sister's name in an immovable last place on the waiting list for entrance. The more she was called upon to account for her grades, and the more she became aware that she could not better them, the more she came to defend her status by discounting the value of grades in comparison with the value of popularity. She "showed them" by becoming one of the most sought-after members of a clique of the prettiest and most heedless and reckless girls in the school, who were aided and abetted in their pranks by 90 per cent of the boys. To Virginia, high school became a social whirl definitely restricted to this select group. Strictly outside the pale were the earnest students, who were "greasy grinds"; the teachers, who were "people you can't have any fun with"; and books, which were "something to be burned on graduation day." No institution of higher learning ever subsequently got its clutches on Virginia.

There was a very real change in Virginia, from Ames personality to Bates personality, a change which her family summed up as a certain deliberate giddiness to cover humiliation, and a certain bitterness toward the kinds of people who made that humiliation possible. It seems extremely doubtful that Virginia would have acquired these specific behavior patterns, attitudes and reactions had she continued in a school atmosphere where her confidence in her academic ability was not so quickly and rudely deflated, where she had not the experience at the same time of terror in facing men teachers, where there was no new, exciting presence of boys giving a possibility of compensation, nor where relative independence from supervision gave her ample opportunity to pursue the compensations.

3. The age composition of the school population is important in a number of ways, varying in significance from one age group to another. Reference has already been made to the extent and rigidity of age grading and the ascription of status on an age basis. Age composition is a factor, then, in the social structure of the school and in the relationship of students with one another. Many concrete results follow from this—leadership on an age basis; the time necessary to reach the top grade, as for instance in a school with two grades in contrast with one with six; and the prevalence of "crushes" on older students.

A teacher of experience and keen insight suggests that the system of junior and senior high schools in vogue in many areas has a certain unsteady effect upon youngsters because of the way in which it changes their statuses quickly and repeatedly. The "big fellows" come up from elementary school and become freshmen in junior high. Within a space of two years, they are the "big fellows" again. They are seniors in junior high, are allowed privileges that are not given the others, and are permitted activities that are actually way beyond them

merely because they are the oldest students in the school. The next year they go to senior high and become the babies of the school again. Two years later they are once more, and this time real, seniors and receive all the school's admiration and privileges. They do not have time to get their feet steadied in any one status position. Of course, this can be carried one step further, into college and university.

Another significant aspect of age composition in the school world is seen in the experience levels which it brings together. Chronological age is roughly an index of experience in life, and one phase of the process of normal social development is the timing of the child's experience, i.e., so that he learns and experiences things at the proper time and sequence. Considerable harm results at times from learning a thing too soon and out of the proper sequence, and the age spread of the school world becomes an important factor in the timing of selected aspects of the learning process, particularly those that are confined to pupil contacts. One simple illustration will suffice. The presence of a twelve-year-old girl in a class of nine- and ten-year-olds projects the experience of menstruation into the attention and knowledge of the class before its younger members are prepared to receive it.

4. The significance of the sex make-up of a class or a school is an old topic, perennially considered in open debate or involved in the determination of scholastic policies. Less importance has been attached to its role in the earlier years, but its effects upon the conditioning of sex attitudes during these years may be more significant than is commonly supposed. In the stage when girls begin to reject boys their own age in favor of those two or three years older, the combination of boys and girls of approximately the same age in the same class may be the genesis of many of the disciplinary problems that perplex the junior high-school teacher. The situation here is one of conflict between the two sexes, in which the boys seek to regain their standing with the girls, often experimenting with behavior which neither the school authorities nor adult society labels as socially desirable. Other questions arise later. Can the educational process proceed normally on a co-educational basis? The present tendency in most educational systems is to ignore the sex line, this attitude being as extreme as that of an earlier age which favored the exact opposite. Interested observers tend to agree that the passing of sex lines in American education has been a change of great importance, but evidence regarding the specific results is vague and episodic.

5. The age at which class distinctions manifest themselves in the school world varies somewhat, but with many children they appear around the twelfth year. The distinctions and the sifting and selective forces which appear then derive principally from the families of the pupils. How these operate has been shown by several recent studies, two of which will be summarized briefly.

First are the studies made by Warner and his associates.<sup>34</sup> These show how selective forces operate in the child's scholastic life. There is, to begin with, the separation of public- and private-school students. Next, there is the factor of ecological distribution among the elementary schools within a city—for example, lower-class children largely attending one school, and middle-class children going to the school in their local area. At the high-school level, distribution among the differing curricula becomes largely a class distribution. Close analysis of the child's school life from the standpoint of these factors indicates that by the end of the first or second year in high school, the class structure of the school world and the approximate distribution of the school population, on the basis of both social and geographic distance, has taken form.

A recent study by Neugarten throws light on the ways in which the social status of the family affects the social development of children. This study includes data on 380 children in a midwestern town, where the population is about 90 per cent native-born whites, with no Negroes or Orientals, and only two small ethnic groups. Five social classes exist with some distinctness. The children were asked to indicate who were their best friends, whom they did not want to play with, whom their mothers wanted them to play or not to play with, and whom they would choose for a friend if they could choose anyone they wanted. Also, they were asked to give short descriptions and characterizations of the reputations of other children.<sup>35</sup> Significant among the findings of this study are the following:

- a. With the exception of the lowest status group, children tend to select as friends, first, children of a status higher than their own, and second, children of their own status level.
- b. The child from a family of upper status occupies an enviable

<sup>34</sup> W. Lloyd Warner and Paul Lunt, *The Social Life of a Modern Community*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1941. See particularly chap. 17.

<sup>35</sup> For details of the methodology, consult Neugarten, Bernice, "Social Class and Friendship Among School Children," *American Journal of Sociology*, January, 1946, pp. 305-313.

position; many of his classmates consider him their friend or would choose him for a friend, or mention him as their parents' choice. Few of his classmates mention him as a person they would not want for a friend.

c. The child from the family of lower status faces the opposite situation. He is seldom mentioned as a friend, and then only by children of his own status, but he is mentioned often as a person whom his classmates do not like and whom parents do not want their children to play with.

d. The lower-class child has the reputation of being poorly dressed, not good-looking, unpopular, aggressive; of not liking school; of being dirty and bad-mannered; of not having a good time; and of not playing fair. These opinions tend to be held even by members of his own status group.

e. The child of a family of upper status enjoys a reputation almost exactly the opposite—he is considered well dressed, good-looking, popular; as liking school, as being clean and well mannered; as always having a good time; and as playing fair.

f. It is clear that by the time the child reaches the fifth grade, the lower-class child faces a very different problem of adjustment in his school life than do the middle- and upper-class child.

g. By the time adolescence has arrived, boys and girls of upper status are conspicuous among their classmates, irrespective of their personal attributes; some enjoy desirable and others undesirable reputations. Adolescents of high status find themselves in the limelight, and both attractive and unattractive characteristics are revealed. Those of middle and lower status, being less conspicuous, have less well-differentiated reputations.

h. Lowest-status boys and girls, to judge by the data on both friendship and reputation, are, as a group, socially isolated and ignored by the other children.

i. As regards reputation, social class seems to operate at two age levels somewhat in the following manner. At the fifth- and sixth-grade levels, membership in an upper-class group carries with it a kind of insurance that one's reputation will be favorable. Membership in a lower class is almost certain to result in an unfavorable reputation among one's peers. At the high-school level, upper status is a sure indication that the adolescent will be the object of attention in his group, whether his reputation is favorable or not. On the other hand, as the lower-

class child grows older, he drops out of school or, by taking on the behavior or values of his middle-class associates, he tends to lose his distinguishing lower-class characteristics.

j. The fact that social class differences in friendship and reputation are so well established by the time children reach the fifth grade seems of considerable significance. The child of eleven or twelve soon becomes aware of his reputation and desirability as a friend, and he must make his adjustment in the light of what others think of him. It may well be that one of the reasons why the lower-class child is so often a behavior problem in school is that he finds himself rejected by his classmates and has an unenviable reputation. This may also be one of the reasons why such a child often welcomes the first opportunity to leave school altogether.<sup>36</sup>

Distinctions of other kinds project themselves into the school world. Educators report that Negro children living in federal housing projects in large cities are identified as such in school, and definitely lose caste as a result. During the war a similar situation prevailed in regard to migrant war workers, or "defense workers" as they were commonly called. Such families seemed to have a distinctive status in the communities to which they came. They were spoken of as "those families who are here on defense jobs," with an implication that they were a fly-by-night type of people. In many areas they were resented because they overtaxed the already strained living, schooling, and recreational facilities. In other places they were crowded in trailer camps that had come to be regarded as a menace to the community. In some cities, like Detroit, they particularly accentuated housing conditions already very bad. In other cases their status was complicated by the fact that they represented minority groups. Rather generally, older residents resented their use of community facilities to whose maintenance they had not contributed through taxation, they particularly resented their special privileges as defense workers in securing new automobiles and extra gasoline allotments. On the whole, and to a considerable extent, migrant war-working families lived in war communities as strangers, as objects of a rather pervasive social isolation.<sup>37</sup>

Significance is often attached by the school world to distinctions between pupils living in the school area and commuters from the out-

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 310-313.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. James H. S. Bossard, "Family Backgrounds of Wartime Adolescents," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, November, 1944, p. 41.

side. Many school districts, especially suburbs, are too small to maintain adequate high-school facilities, and hence arrange for such pupils to go to school in a larger, neighboring district. This may be a feasible and often necessary arrangement, but it has reverberations in these children's social development which have been overlooked. These "outsiders" are generally spotted as such, and tend to be discriminated against in various ways, such as election to class and school offices, membership in fraternal and social clubs, and so on. Discussion of this experience with persons who have gone through it indicates that, even after twenty or more years, memories of these discriminations are often vivid and emotionally colored. Similar distinctions prevail at certain boarding schools between the boarding and the day students.

6. No school world can be understood without recognizing the existence of a separate culture in it. This fact needs to be considered from two points of view. First, the school culture is an entity, separate from the adult culture which the children share. This school culture is in part an unconscious accumulation growing out of the past life of the school; in part, it is a conscious creation, designed for the purpose of shutting out the adult, whether teacher, parent, or other. In the school culture, the adult has the status of an alien.

The second approach to the school culture is in terms of the constituent elements that compose it, as indicated chiefly by the cultural backgrounds from which the children come. Thrasher, writing of this, emphasizes two facts which are particularly significant in this connection. The first is the variety of cultural backgrounds found in American communities.

A complicating factor for all educational programs is the number and variety of different social backgrounds which give conflicting definitions of social values. Among preliterate peoples and in simple European peasant communities cultural diffusion is largely absent. There is a consistent series of social definitions which govern all human activities. In the American city, on the contrary, we find a kaleidoscopic variety of natural areas representing many diverse cultural and nationality backgrounds which do not mutually support each other in the social definitions which they are accustomed to impart to their children. A further confusion is brought about by the concurrence of many different social worlds, not ecologically defined necessarily, but existing more or less independently in the same community. These social worlds, although of many types, often take on the character of racial or nationality groupings. Of importance also are the occupational groupings, such as those of the artist, the working classes represented by various labor organizations, the teachers, lawyers, the underworld, the

Bohemians, and so on. . . . Little Italy, Chinatown, and the Ghetto, which may be taken as illustrative of these numerous and contrasting social backgrounds, each have their own social values, brought to America from other lands and places and expressed in widely divergent attitudes and customs. Even within a single nationality grouping one finds wide differences in language, traditions, customs and philosophies of life. These divergencies are well illustrated within the Italian and Jewish groups.<sup>38</sup>

The second important fact is the integration of these backgrounds in any particular school. Thrasher mentions this, too, in these words: "In any given community no single social influence or set of influences exist in a vacuum or in isolation. It is the interrelationship and integration of different social influences that give a community or neighborhood its unique qualities and its effectiveness as a social environment for the development not of individual children but of the whole group of children in the area in question."<sup>39</sup>

#### CULTURAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SCHOOL AND HOME

Cultural differences, particularly of an ideological nature, inevitably develop between the school and the family world. Many of these are minor in character or degree of difference, but some become so serious as to create major difficulties in either parent-child or school-child relationships, or both. Selected aspects of these differences will be considered briefly.

1. The school, as the formal and official instrumentality of American culture, runs counter to the culture of various immigrant groups. The differences that exist may cover the range of language, mores, family life, political traditions, conceptions of the universe, philosophy of man's role, and many other social values. In school, through formal instruction and informal contacts, the children learn to live in a world which is alien to their parents. Many, having learned the American way of life, tend to set themselves off from the parental group. Teachers in the school at times reflect the attitude that whatever is foreign is inferior. They attempt to Americanize the children as rapidly as possible. Frequently they put pressure upon the children to turn away from everything resembling the culture of the parents. Influenced by this attitude, the children begin to despise the customs and culture of their

<sup>38</sup> Frederic M. Thrasher, "Social Background and Informal Education," *Journal of Educational Sociology*, April, 1944, pp. 471 and 479.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 481.



forbears. The school thus stimulates the child to reject his parents and their culture.

How fundamental and far reaching these ideological differences may be is suggested in a contrast pointed out by Mangione.<sup>40</sup> The Sicilians, he says, lay everything on the doorstep of destiny. *E U Destino*—this single phrase explains everything. For centuries this has been the comforting philosophy of the Sicilians. Priests talked about it. Teachers emphasized it. But in America, children come home from school with the philosophy that every man is the architect of his own fortune, that anyone who works hard and has plenty of ambition can achieve anything he wants. When children talk about this at home, their parents only complain that the teachers teach them fairy tales.

2. The school as a non-partisan, non-sectarian culture-transmitting agency naturally runs counter to the ideological patterns of many families. Some of these conflicts are open and avowed, but others arise by way of implication. In groups where religious affiliation is taken so seriously as to dominate the life and thought of the members, the resultant conflicts may be irreconcilable. Obvious illustrations include religious cults that forbid children to participate in patriotic exercises at school, such as flag-raising ceremonies; the observance of holidays other than those on the public-school calendar; and interpretations of and conclusions about life problems, imposed by a religious body and at variance with those developed in the school's regular courses of instruction. Most often, however, the differences which arise between the school's non-partisan and non-sectarian approach and the insistences of specific groups do not take the form of overt conflict, but resolve themselves into a subtle game of cultural pressures and diplomatic avoidances and resistances, as in the case of the Roman Catholic opposition to the public-school program for sex instruction. The development of church schools, like parochial and other denominational schools, is an obvious device of the groups which seek to perpetuate their own culture in contrast to that of the public school.

An illustration of a culture conflict like the foregoing, but somewhat in reverse, is given by Malinowski and concerns the establishment of mission schools in Africa. Here a school system, based on elements derived from a highly mechanized, capitalistic, and sophisticated culture, is established by Christian missionaries, whereas the life of the people

<sup>40</sup> Jerre Mangione, *Mount Allegro*, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1942, p. 83.

operates on a tribal basis. The results, as described by Malinowski, are rather unfortunate, involving the loss for the African of much of his cultural heritage, without a corresponding gain or acquisition of the new culture.<sup>41</sup>

3. There are social class pressures which differ from those of the public school. As pointed out in the chapter on class differentials, the public school tends everywhere to be a middle-class institution, directed by middle-class officials and administrators, taught by middle-class teachers, and maintaining middle-class norms of behavior. Lower-class children tend not to fit in, and another of the reasons why they present behavior problems at times is the antagonisms to the school culture which are aroused in them by their parents. Many lower-class homes are in conflict with the schools, and the conflict is usually resolved by having the children withdraw from school as early as possible. Similarly, the cultural pressures of upper-class homes differ from those of the public school, but the conflict here is resolved in many cases by transferring the child to an upper-class private school. Such schools serve several purposes: they add geographic to social distance, they make possible the segregation of relatively homogeneous cultural groups, and they facilitate the transmission of the class culture. Upper-class children who continue in public school, on the other hand, often become the victims of the cultural conflict to which reference has been made.

4. One of the chief points of culture conflict between many homes and schools involves the patterns of child training. Obviously, this is basic to the parents' as well as the teachers' relations with the child. In many parts of the world, there are now and have been no problems in this connection, since both home and school agree on aims and methodology. But in contemporary America, the situation in home and school is in flux. In terms of the home, widely differing emphases prevail. In some homes, the fundamental purpose of child rearing is to train the child to conform; in others, it is to rear him so as to stimulate his development. Perhaps another way of bringing out the contrast is to ask if the child is parent-dominated, one on whom the parent imposes patterns of behavior; or whether the family is a democratic one in which the children have some leeway in developing their own patterns in response to their specific needs. The difference is basic, coloring many of the minutiae of family life.

<sup>41</sup> Bronislaw Malinowski, "The Pan African Problem of Culture Contact," *American Journal of Sociology*, May, 1943, pp. 649-666.

There are similar differences in regard to the role of the school. Should the school impose upon the child a set of behavior patterns and a curriculum, so as to implement readily his induction into the prevailing culture, or should the child be encouraged to utilize the school to work out his own answers to the problems confronting him? This, in rather general terms, may be thought of as the contrast between conventional and progressive methods in education.

The development of many children is complicated by the fact that the systems of child rearing utilized at home and in school differ materially. Children from democratic homes go to conventional schools; the products of autocratic homes are sent to progressive schools. All kinds of combinations are possible, and the following case illustrates one of them:

Blankville is an upper-class residential community. Homes average in cost in normal times from \$25,000 to \$50,000. Parents are considerably above the average in intellectual interests and in their demand for the best for their children. In most homes, the emphasis is upon the strict training of children to accept the behavior patterns of their upper-class status, i.e., to conform to the prevailing code. On the other hand, the intellectual interest of the community expressed itself in a demand for a public school system "second to none." In pursuance of this interest, noted progressive educators were invited to Blankville to set up "an up-to-date" school system, and this was done for the first eight grades. The high school span was not included, and retained its traditional emphases. The result of all this, from the standpoint of the children of Blankville, has been somewhat as follows. From a home in which the training is directed toward conformity the child moves to a school system in which the emphasis for eight years is upon a progressive stimulation of the child's self-development, necessitating that he shuttle back and forth each day from one world to another. Then, having been trained in school by progressive methods for eight years, the child now proceeds to the high school in which the old conventional emphases are reasserted.

5. A final cultural conflict between school and home arises from their contrasting interpretations of life and the universe. The significant fact here is that much of our thinking and many of our modes of interpretation have been revolutionized within the span of a generation or two. Utilizing the Comtean terminology, the shift has been from a theological to a scientific interpretation of life. The result of this sudden and relatively complete shift has been that large numbers of parents and elder kinsfolk still think in theological terms, whereas the children

have acquired a scientific approach and mode of interpretation. Here is a significant cultural conflict coinciding with the difference between generations. Its seriousness varies from one part of the country to another, but seems to be more marked in the south and parts of the west. In some cases, when families send their children to the universities, often at considerable financial sacrifice, only to find them returning with this "new nonsense," the problem becomes particularly keen. At times, parents or children or both personalize the issue, and then the deeper loyalties of family life become involved.

6. Whatever one's personal loyalties to the cause of education, the fact remains that, in our contemporary society, the school is often the creator of cultural conflicts for the child. At a very tender age, a child is taken away from his home to enter this specialized institution, which develops its own dual culture: that of the classroom and that of a more purely social world. Development of conflict between the schematized teaching of the school and the pervasive influences of the home is but the more obvious aspect of a much larger conflict situation. Some of this larger culture conflict is due to the cultural diversity of our population, some of it to the rapidity with which our culture undergoes change and the relative place of successive generations in that change. It is much aggravated when the school undertakes, as some educators insist that it shall do, to educate for cultural discontinuities rather than for cultural continuity.

The problems involved are not simple. Parents are voters and taxpayers, they have sired the children and are maintaining them. They have at least the prestige of maturity and the passing rights of trusteeship. Educators are trained to perform a specialized function in society, they are supposed to have superior knowledge and insight, and they are expected to prepare children for living in what today is a rapidly changing world, confident of its ability to remake itself in the interests of a better and more abundant life. Educators, in other words, have their responsibilities. Children are young. They owe allegiance to their parents, but they need preparation for life. They too have their needs and their rights. The problem of adjusting these conflicting interests becomes particularly keen and may reach pathological forms when totalitarian nations, backed by the resources of the state, take their children in hand to mold them into specific types of personalities, to the end that they may become an interchangeable cog or part in a vast

human machine which is subject to the party in power. Such processes—and dangers, it should be added—are not confined to fascist cultures alone.

#### SUMMARY

1. A school is a complex of social situations in which children live. In part, it is a workaday world in which they perform; in part, it is a social world in which the life of the intermediate generation centers.

2. Teachers constitute a small but important part of the school population. Many facts about teachers, in addition to their professional preparation, are important in this connection, such as their age, sex, marital status, mental hygiene, conception of behavior problems, ways of handling them, and personality make-up.

3. There is a pupil world separate from the teacher personnel. The factors which affect this world as a milieu for child development include the size of the school world, the mobility of the school population, its age and sex composition, the appearance of class distinctions, and the distinctness of the school culture.

4. Cultural differences between the school and the home are inevitable and often serious. The culture of the school may run counter to that of specific cultural groups; its non-partisan and non-sectarian role may differ from the ideological patterns of political, religious, and other groups; class cultural pressures may differ from those of the public school; systems of child rearing may show marked contrasts; contrasting interpretations of life and the universe may be accepted by home and school, respectively.

5. The problems of this cultural rift between school and home are difficult, and, in a sense, insoluble. Parents, educators, and children each have their own respective needs and rights and, because of rapidly changing ideologies, they tend to remain apart. The resultant conflicts and differences are imposed upon the child, another link in the chain of social causation which makes doubt and uncertainty such characteristic aspects of the philosophy of contemporary man.



recognized, for the peer group is more than an association of equals whose concern is with each other; it is, in a certain very specific sense, also a grouping in which the adult is assigned the status of alien and the purpose of which is to maintain that status.

This element of antagonism between peer groups and adults has been fostered through the years in a great many ways—by the antagonism of parents, the ridicule of older people, and the lack of understanding of the legitimate role of peer groups on the part of teachers, policemen, and others who deal habitually with growing boys and girls. Even during recent decades when more serious and more scientific attention was given to such matters, the one peer group considered was the gang, and then primarily as a source of crime and delinquency.

At least four factors have combined to emphasize the importance of the gang in connection with crime. First was the constant reference in the daily press to gangs and their criminal activities, with the result that the term gangster has become synonymous in the public mind with criminal. Second was the conclusion of various scientific studies of crime, which showed that it is so largely a gang operation. Solitary individuals do commit crime, but by far the greater part of it is a companionship affair. Third was the fact that the gang was viewed as a leisure-time phenomenon during a period when leisure time was increasing and was being studied primarily from the standpoint of cleansing it from the "stain" of anti-social behavior. Finally, there has been the growth of the school of Gestalt psychology, with its insistence upon seeing the delinquent or other behavior case in his configurational setting. The result of these and other factors was the crystallization of a general attitude that a gang is a group whose membership is to be identified, whose behavior is to be controlled, and whose existence is to be terminated.

In the last few years, the larger and more normal aspects of these peer groups have come to be recognized by students of social behavior. It is now realized that there are other peer groups than anti-social gangs, and their function in the lives of growing boys and girls is both natural and important. In other words, these peer groups take form for the most part naturally, even if at times riotously like weeds, in the area between the family group and such later adult institutions as the state, industry, or the church. Mostly, they tend to fall into two main categories. First, there are the informal peer groupings, such as the play group, the clique and the gang; and second, the more formally or-

ganized ones, such as clubs and fraternities. Perhaps we should include here such character-building agencies as the Boy Scouts, Camp Fire Girls, summer camps, etc. However, since the latter are not constituted and operated entirely as peer groups, they are omitted from consideration, although this is not to be interpreted in any way as implying a lack of recognition of their great importance. More extended discussion of the peer groups recently and currently emphasized in sociological literature follows.

### *The Play Group.*

The play group is the most informal of the peer groupings and also the earliest in the child's life to develop. Conceived as a group, it is essentially an association of equals to share in a common play experience, with emphasis upon common rules and an understanding of the limitations which group activity places upon the individual. As most frequently used, the term is applied to groups of children in the lower age brackets. Gesell and Ilg,<sup>2</sup> as well as Hurlock<sup>3</sup> and others, have shown that from somewhere between the third and fourth year children prefer to play in groups, that the size of the group depends on the age of the children, and that the size increases with their age. Periods of preference for solitary play intervene from time to time, but gradually these begin to disappear, interest in organized play activities arises, and boys and girls begin to play separately. These play groupings tend to be temporary in character and limited in scope to some particular kind of play or the use of some common play space or equipment. In many cases, their origin is voluntary and spontaneous; in other instances, particularly at the lower age levels, they are engineered in large part by adult intervention as an adjunct to some other activity, such as that of a school, settlement house, or hospital. Play groups operate chiefly in schools and at neighborhood centers, and from the fourth to the twelfth year. They may be thought of as cliques and gangs in embryo.

### *The Clique.*

After the twelfth year, when social distinctions begin to manifest themselves in the child's life, references appear with increasing fre-

<sup>2</sup> Arnold Gesell and Frances Ilg, *The Child From Five To Ten*, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1946, pp. 359-373.

<sup>3</sup> Elizabeth B. Hurlock, *Child Development*, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., New York, 1942, p. 226.



quency to "our crowd," "our set," etc. In recent years, the term clique has been used in sociological literature to designate this type of peer group.

A clique may be defined as a small, intimate social participation group consisting of persons of the same social status and in agreement concerning the exclusion of other individuals from the group. Some students of the clique, like Davis and the Gardners,<sup>4</sup> differentiate between the small or clique proper and the extended clique, the latter including a somewhat larger group with whom one is willing to participate, whose opinions matter, but with whom association is not intimate.

A clique has a definite membership which may vary in number from two to as many as thirty. It may or may not be age graded, and it may be unisexual or bisexual. Its organization is informal. It has no explicit rules of entrance or exit. The bond which holds it together is intimacy of interaction among the members, a strong sense of solidarity, and a common behavior pattern. Its significance for its members on the emotional side is very great. This expresses itself principally in two ways. First, as between members, it involves strong feelings of friendship and of responsibility to render mutual assistance in case of need; second, in regard to other groups and outside demands, the clique is given preference, even over the families of its members.

The clique operates primarily as an instrument of the class structure. It is essentially a prestige device to achieve, maintain, or confirm class status. It is most important at the upper-class levels, where it functions informally and intimately. In the middle classes, cliques are more formal, restrained, and conventional. Members participate in many ways, but to a more limited degree than at the upper-class levels. Middle-class cliques are more casual and are often formally organized. Lower-class boys and girls, it is significant to note, do not participate in cliques as a rule, having neither the time, leisure, social graces, social interests, nor home opportunities. This variation of clique operation is highly significant because it confirms the role of the clique in class functioning. Cliques operate constantly in school, athletic, and social activities. They are particularly favored by social climbers, who seek to utilize them to gain constant identification with a higher status group. The life of the clique, however, is generally not of long duration.

<sup>4</sup> Allison Davis, B. B. Gardner, and Mary R. Gardner, *Deep South*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1941, p. 138.

*The Gang.*

The concept of the gang, as it has been developed in sociological literature, is based upon conflict. This has been true throughout the period of its serious study. Almost a half century ago, McCormick wrote of the gang as a conflict group: "A gang can never thrive without another gang to fight with."<sup>5</sup> Similarly, Puffer, writing in 1905, defined a gang in terms of "the conflict test."<sup>6</sup> It is in the work of Thrasher, foremost among modern students of the gang, that this conflict concept is most definitely emphasized. Thrasher defines a gang as "an interstitial group originally formed spontaneously, and then integrated through conflict" (p. 57). "When it becomes a conflict group it becomes a gang" (p. 30). "To become a true gang the group as a whole must move through space (linear action) and eventually . . . must meet some hostile element which precipitates conflict" (p. 54).<sup>7</sup>

Current analyses identify the gang as a more integrated and, in a sense, a more formal group than the clique. It tends to have a longer life, and as a result of its greater experience it develops more in the way of tradition and morale. The bond of solidarity is often strong, but membership is less exclusive and more capable of being earned than in the clique. Its objectives tend more in the direction of activity, even if socially not acceptable, than is the case with the clique. Its greater concreteness tends to express itself through formal symbols, such as names, slogans, passwords, grips, uniforms, etc.

## THE INDIVIDUALITY OF PEER GROUPS

Once the more generalized definitions of peer groups, such as the foregoing ones, have been made, it is difficult to proceed except in terms of the purpose, structure, history, and activities of particular groups; and the more one accumulates case studies of these from the literature, from objective observation, and from probing the depths of his own juvenile experience, the more he is impressed with the unique differences that appear. It would seem, then, that peer groups, like the boys and girls who compose them, are singularly individual. Each is a separate sociological phenomenon; each is, in some way or other,

<sup>5</sup> William McCormick, *The Boy and His Clubs*, Fleming H. Revell Company, New York, 1912.

<sup>6</sup> J. Adams Puffer, "Boy's Gangs," *Pedagogical Seminary*, June, 1905, p. 175.

<sup>7</sup> Frederic M. Thrasher, *The Gang*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2nd rev. ed., 1936.

unique. From the study of individual cases, however, certain generalizations concerning the development of these groups may be made, and these are noted briefly.

*Peer Groups Are a Social Product.*

Earlier, there was considerable emphasis on explaining peer groups in terms of innate traits and tendencies in the individual, such as the existence of a gang instinct; but contemporary scholarship, in both psychology and sociology, no longer accepts this point of view. Peer groups are now seen as a function of specific social situations. They develop, as Thrasher has pointed out in the case of gangs, in definite and predictable ways, "in accordance with a form or entelechy that is predetermined by characteristic internal processes and mechanisms."<sup>8</sup> Hence this makes the peer group a legitimate and feasible object of sociological analysis.

*Peer Groups Develop and Take Characteristic Forms on the Basis of Age Gradations.*

The play group is most prevalent in the earlier years, usually from the third or fourth year into the adolescent stage; there is a gang age, as Furfey<sup>9</sup> has called it, that extends from eight or ten over a decade or more of the young person's life; the clique seems to function more particularly after the twelfth year. The onset of these respective peer stages can be identified with much greater precision than their termination, which is dependent upon the attainment of a certain degree of social maturity and its accompanying forms of social behavior. These differ from one individual to another. Some play groups terminate in early adolescence; many change into gangs. There is a gang stage through which most boys pass, but some few never develop beyond it. Every college and fraternity, for example, can identify the "old grad" whose peer group condition is chronic. The clique is a school world device, but upper-class people retain it often into, and occasionally past, middle age.

*Peer Groups Arise to Satisfy Very Definite Needs.*

Peer groups represent the efforts of boys and girls to create a society for themselves. In part, this involves, as already pointed out, a negative

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>9</sup> Paul H. Furfey, *The Gang Age*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1926, chap. 1.

impulse—to escape the supervision and domination of their elders; in part, it results from a positive effort to function with like-minded persons. "It fills a gap and affords an escape."<sup>10</sup> In both aspects there inheres the satisfaction, and thrill, of functioning on one's own and of participating in forms of activity which one's peers rather than their elders select. It is highly important to recognize these facts, for they mean that peer groups serve a legitimate function in the development and socialization of the child. They represent his efforts to create his own world, an experimental and practice world, to fill in the transition from family domination to adult independence. It is in this age span that peer groups function; it is for these purposes that they arise.

*Since Peer Groups Arise to Satisfy Social Needs, It Follows That the Nature of Their Development Follows the Character of the Need.*

The relation between the nature of the peer group and the type of need is shown partly in the adaptation of such groups to the age hierarchy, but much more in their adjustment to the prevailing cultural situations in which they arise and flourish. In an age span and in a cultural setting where social stratification is emphasized, the clique appears as the most important peer group. When children are younger and play is uppermost among their needs, the play group is the prevailing one. But it is in the studies of the gang that this relation is most evident. Thrasher and the entire school of social ecologists have emphasized the gang as a conflict group, emerging as a symptom of certain forms of community life. His study of 1313 gangs in Chicago, with a total membership of more than 25,000, found them located most often in a "twilight zone of railroads and factories which border on the city's central business district. Characteristically, they congregate in interstitial areas, i.e., in areas which represent fissures and breaks in the social organization, and in which all kinds of debris and foreign matter tend to congregate."<sup>11</sup>

Further elaboration of the community background will appear in the next chapter; the particular point to be emphasized here is that the gangland areas which Thrasher and others describe may be thought of as urban industrial frontier areas. The gang as a conflict group is a manifestation of frontier conditions. This fact serves to explain the

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 38.

<sup>11</sup> Frederic M. Thrasher, "The Gang as a Symptom of Community Disorganization," *Journal of Applied Sociology*, January, 1926, pp. 3-21.

widespread prevalence of adult gangs in American history as growing out of the unsettled grouping of diverse elements, inadequate social controls, and the ease of escape from authority and settled community life which characterized frontier life. As the American frontier moved westward, it witnessed the recurrent development of a great variety of lawless gangs. Frontiers in Australia, China, Mexico, and Russia have similarly been the habitat of lawless gangs.<sup>12</sup>

### *Peer Groups Have Natural Histories.*

The conditions which call peer groups forth, the experiences they undergo, the leadership which evolves, the treatment given them by outside agencies, the opposition they encounter, all combine to determine the specific course which their histories will take.

Peer groups arise spontaneously in most cases. That is to say, they are not consciously planned, but take form as children happen to gather at certain places and, because of certain common interests and needs, begin to function collectively. In many instances, their life is short; often the group bond is very loose; there is a continuous ebb and flow in the membership; conflicting personalities and contrasting diversions arise and break up whatever unity may previously have developed. For many children, and in various areas, the very conditions which create a strong need for peer groups make their strong and relatively long-lived development impossible. Here we must note the importance of such factors as the high degree of mobility of many children and their families, the fact that children are subject to various interfering pressures and restraints from their families and other adult groups, and the fact that childhood interests are short lived and often change with considerable rapidity.

On the other hand, the reverse of all this may happen. Play groups are usually thought of as rather transitory, yet the author is familiar with one such group that developed in a stable neighborhood among children of the same approximate age and has persisted for thirteen years at the present writing. Under favorable conditions for the development of peer groups, a strong we-feeling may appear, leadership may emerge, satisfactory common interests may be found, a strongly integrated organization may take form, and a heritage of memories and tradition may accumulate.

<sup>12</sup> Frederic M. Thrasher, "Gangs," *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, vol. vi, p. 564.

Thrasher has shown these contrasting courses of development in the natural history of the gang. In many instances, only a diffuse type of gang appears, with little solidarity and group loyalty, and a short life in point of time; in a lesser number of cases, a solidified type appears, with a longer history, a stronger morale, and a higher degree of integration. Either type, but more especially the latter, may in turn take a variety of forms; it may either veer in the direction of the more conventional club whose activities are socially approved and whose life is incorporated into the structure of the community, or it may become an integrated fighting machine, specializing in some one or several forms of delinquent behavior.

This concept of a natural history of peer groups has significant implications, particularly with reference to their treatment by family and community forces. The customary method of approach has been the direct frontal attack, which sees the peer group as a problem per se, and its breakup or elimination as the major end to be achieved. Obviously, the proper approach must be the indirect or flank approach, which recognizes it as arising to meet definite needs and developing on the basis of conditioning factors. Such an approach offers the possibilities of conscious and constructive direction of the peer group, to the end that its socially legitimate purposes may be served.

### *Race, National Origin, and Religious Aspects.*

One additional feature about peer groups, of unusual and possibly growing importance today, should be noted. This has to do with their racial, national origin, and religious aspects. Each of the different peer groups already referred to is influenced by factors of this kind. Many play groups form themselves, or are formed, to exclude some particular element or elements; the clique, being so largely an instrument of the class structure, may place particular emphasis upon such distinctions; but it is the gang as a conflict group which especially reveals cleavages of this kind.

At least four significant generalizations may be made concerning the role of such factors in gang development. First, being found most frequently in first- and second-generation immigrant areas, gangs appear more often among the Polish, Italian, Irish, etc., than among such older groups as the Swedish and the Germans. Second, gang formation and rivalry often result from the carry-over of Old World antagonisms to the New World. The bitter enmity between Jews and Poles in Europe

is transplanted to our cities, and when anti-Semitism flares in Europe its echoes become increasingly clear here. Even the animosities in the Orient, between Syrian and Assyrian Persians, are brought to Chicago, according to Thrasher.<sup>13</sup> Third, territorial clashes between nationality groups that have become segregated into relatively homogeneous groups often flare forth and at times develop into traditional feuds which are continued on a territorial basis after the originally antagonistic elements have lost their distinctive identity. Fourth, race riots, growing out of the expansion of Black Belts in various northern cities, have gang reverberations. According to Bradford Chambers, who has investigated juvenile gangs in New York, Boston, Philadelphia, and other cities:

Today gang wars are based to a large extent on racial and religious hatreds and frustrations. It is in the borderline districts of diverse racial and religious groupings and within racially segregated areas that the gangs glory in battle; it is in these neighborhoods that adolescents are being killed. In Manhattan, gang warfare takes place almost exclusively in uptown areas, where the overcrowded Harlem Negroes and Puerto Ricans are pushing their way into better housing areas. Recently these groups have been moving into the Bronx, and strife has broken out there too. In 1939, when jobs became abundant, Manhattan Negroes began to acquire the income necessary to move out of the restricted slum districts. As the war brought higher wages and a fresh wave of migration from the South, the Negro influx into white areas was accelerated. It was about then that the conflict gangs came into being. Before that time, street corner clubs in upper Manhattan had served mainly as outlets for athletic activity, as the groups farther downtown still do. When the traditional colored districts began to expand, however, the white boys' clubs, led by the Hancocks, the Rainbows and the Irish Dukes, turned to conflict.<sup>14</sup>

#### PEER GROUPS AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Many other features about the development, structure, life, and activities of peer groups have been investigated, and their complete analysis constitutes interesting chapters. The chief concern here, however, is with the more outstanding ways in which these groups operate in the field of child development.

#### *Recognition of the Rights of Others.*

Perhaps the first and most difficult step in the socialization of the child is the recognition of the rights of others. This involves a process of

<sup>13</sup> Thrasher, *The Gang*, p. 197.

<sup>14</sup> Bradford Chambers, "The Juvenile Gangs of New York," *American Mercury*, April, 1946, pp. 480-481.

social education, more particularly in the lower age brackets and principally through the medium of experience. This process begins, of course, with the child's life with his family, as a number of the earlier chapters have shown. But the family, from one standpoint, is often an unnatural or inadequate socializing group. Frequently it is too small, especially the contemporary family; its personnel is too largely adult; and all its members tend to be emotionally disposed toward a type of relationship which differs from that prevailing in society as a whole. The peer group differs in these important respects from the family group: it consists of equals, i.e., persons of the same approximate age and stage of development, and there is no emotional bond of the kind that is found in the family. The peer group involves association on a normal basis with equals who are equally bent on their own interests and self-expression. It is from experience in such groups, more particularly the earlier play groups, that the child gains an understanding of the limitations which group life places upon the individual. This is the first lesson learned in living with others, and it can best, and perhaps only, be learned through experience.

Early in this experience, common rules based on common experience begin to develop. These rules are requisite conditions for the existence of the group; the mere fact of group existence and action calls them forth. In part they are inventions of the group members, devised to meet a specific situation or problem; in part they are borrowed from other groups of children, usually older ones; in part they are obtained from or imposed by adults.

The acceptance of these rules, as in play groups, is characteristically slow and sporadic. For some years, usually between the third and the seventh year, the child partly accepts them and partly does not. Thus one sees children of this age playing, now in groups and in observance of the rules; now, off by themselves. Sometime after the seventh year, Piaget identifies a stage of *incipient cooperation*, in which "all begin to concern themselves with the question of mutual control and of unification of the rules."<sup>15</sup> Although some degree of agreement is reached, the rules remain rather vague and it is not until the eleventh or twelfth year that the codification of rules is made. Then, too, comes their acceptance by mutual consent. A child must respect the rules of the peer group if he wishes to belong. "This is the way we play the

<sup>15</sup> Jean Piaget, *The Moral Judgment of the Child*, Kegan Paul, London, 1932, p. 17.



game." Cooperative teamwork develops, and the requirements for participation are now socialized.

Utilizing the terminology of morals, Piaget develops an interesting contrast between the morality of constraint and that of cooperation. Morality of constraint consists of a series of objective duties based on respect for persons in authority. It is imposed upon the child from above, and is accepted because of the prestige and power of its source. Acceptance is much like that of language, as one of the realities imposed by the adult world. Morality is a duty. The right thing to do is to obey the will of the parent; the wrong thing is to have a will of one's own. Morality of cooperation rests upon mutual understanding between equals. It involves autonomy of conformity. Free from adult supervision, the child inspires his own rules. "As soon as the individual escapes from the domination of age, he tends toward cooperation as the normal form of social equilibrium."<sup>16</sup> These rules are accepted because the child realizes that they are necessary for the continuance of group life. As a result, he imposes these rules upon himself. Consciousness of a sense of justice now appears, and this sense of justice "requires nothing more for its development than the mutual respect and solidarity which holds among children themselves."<sup>17</sup>

### *The Peer Group as an Agency of Control.*

Complementary to what has just been said is the fact that the peer group has great importance as an agency in controlling the behavior of its members. To be accepted, members must conform to the standards of the group. The peer group is a primary group among equals, its relationships are intimate in character, there is relative familiarity, and the members are closely identified with each other. As a result, they become very sensitive to each other's approval and disapproval, which means that group pressure upon the individual is great. Ogburn and Nimkoff point out two principles regarding the primary group in this connection: first, that the group frequently exerts a more effective control over the conduct of its members than can an outside individual charged with special authority; and second, that the most efficient regulator of all is a group of persons of the same age and interests.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 99.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 195-196.

<sup>18</sup> W. F. Ogburn and Meyer Nimkoff, *Sociology*, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1940, p. 266.

These are commonplace facts in the sociology of primary group life; what happens is that most parents, and sometimes students of child development, fail to appreciate that primary groups among children operate in the same way as they do among adults. Several aspects of their operation will be noted briefly.

The peer group imposes its own rules or codes, i.e., those which center around its activities and purposes. Piaget has shown this process in the play group, as has Murphy in her excellent study of a nursery-school group.<sup>19</sup> In fact, a large part of the purpose and success of the present-day nursery school lies in its power to control effectively the behavior of its young members. Davis and the Gardners<sup>20</sup> have emphasized this in particular about the clique. Each clique has a common behavior pattern (p. 168). The behavior of its members is controlled, in their relations both with each other and with other persons (p. 169). Being an instrument of the class structure, the clique determines with what members of other cliques the member may have occasional informal and formal participation. The more stable the clique, the more marked is its control over the activities and associations of its members (pp. 169-170). Similarly, Thrasher has emphasized group control in the gang.<sup>21</sup> The gang, he says, is a unit which enforces its code upon its members in a variety of ways. Some of these are consciously and definitely directed, and others operate at the unconscious and unreflective level; but in virtually all cases there are emphases upon the common primary group virtues and the particular attitudes which focus about the group. Finally, we might include as examples of group control the various developments of the honor system, as in student examinations or in boys' reformatories.

Special mention should be made of the peer group's control over the attitude and behavior of its members toward persons outside the group. This has been most clearly emphasized in the case of the clique, but it is prevalent in all peer groups. Particularly evident in the control of attitudes toward adults with whom members of the peer groups come most often or most closely in contact, such as teachers, parents, and policemen. Since one purpose of many such groups is to ascribe the status of alien to adults with whom they are concerned, the next step often is to identify these adults as enemies, until at times a compre-

<sup>19</sup> Lois Barclay Murphy, *Social Behavior and Child Personality*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1937.

<sup>20</sup> Davis, Gardner, and Gardner, *op. cit.*, chap. 7 and 9.

<sup>21</sup> Thrasher, *The Gang*, chap. 15.

hensive pattern of behavior toward some adult may become the heart of the group's esprit de corps. Most persons can find ready illustrations of this in their own school experiences, usually in the junior or senior high school period. Proprietors of small shops in the neighborhood of a school—their importance in the social development of young boys and girls has never been adequately appreciated or studied—often play a significant role in the development of the attitudinal patterns of peer groups. This is well illustrated in the following case:

The "Union Avenue Crowd" had as their hangout a candy and tobacco store at Third and Union Avenue, which was two blocks away from the senior high school. Because of its nearness to the school, it was a convenient place to gather until the last minute before school time, as well as after sessions. Early in October, 19—, talk among the "crowd" that gathered there began to focus upon a new physics teacher. Apparently without experience as a teacher or facility as a disciplinarian, a trouble developed between him and several members of the crowd. The proprietor of the shop was a former circus performer and small bit actor, with some special ability in mimicry. Having seen the new physics teacher, he was quick to seize upon several of his mannerisms as affording a special outlet for his powers of mimicry. This greatly delighted the crowd, and suggested a pattern of mimicry of the new teacher which was carried subtly and surreptitiously into the classroom by the more adept performers among the boys. The teacher's further disciplinary attempts only aggravated matters. The proprietor, because of his role as original imitator, was drawn increasingly, and as an active agent, into the tension between the teacher and the crowd. The matter subsequently passed from the control of the physics teacher to the school's administrative heads who, ignorant of the role of the shopkeeper and the existence of a definitely unified peer group, meted out disciplinary measures upon a few of the boys in the class.

Again, the peer group serves to correct extremes or deviations of behavior among its members, thus illustrating the well-known sociological principle that the primary group exerts a conservative influence on behavior. Among peer groups, these deviations are generally the ones that are out of line with the age, sex, or class range of its members. We might speak of them as the usual run of adolescent vagaries. For the boy who is a noisy braggart, nothing more subduing can be devised than close association with other boys, equally braggart if possible. The girl whose endless poses before the mirror are "a trial and affliction" to her parents can be cured, if at all, by several healthy young male extroverts. The lad who always insists on having his own way needs to run with the pack. Even more complex problems can be handled most effectively by the peer group, as Bill's case illustrates.

Bill was a late adolescent who began to run around with a girl who not only lived on the other side of the railroad tracks, but who had most of the traits associated with that oft-used phrase. Bill's family was upper class, Bill was personally most attractive, and his mother knew the power of a peer group. Calling Bill to her, she explained with disarming friendliness that she had heard of his new girl and wanted to meet her. Wouldn't he bring her to the house, and to make it less formal, she would invite a few of his favorite friends. Upon securing Bill's wondering and semi-reluctant consent, the mother proceeded to promote, secretly, a gala event, to which she invited all of Bill's extended clique. Bill's relations with the new girl just barely survived until the end of the party.

One final fact about the peer group as an agency of control over its members requires emphasis, and this is the priority it has in the mind of the child. Careful students of child development have emphasized repeatedly that it exercises a greater degree of control than the family. "An adolescent member of a boys' or girls' clique," write Warner and Lunt,<sup>22</sup> "will sometimes defy his or her family to maintain the respect of clique mates, should the interests of the two groups run counter to each other." Davis and the Gardners conclude that the clique is a more powerful mechanism for controlling behavior than the family because they too find that, when confronted by conflicts between their families and their cliques, adolescents respond positively to the demands of their cliques and repudiate those of their families. Obviously, this is even truer in the case of a more integrated peer group such as a gang. Parents often fail to understand the logic of this, and berate the child as disobedient, incorrigible, or ungrateful. The problem becomes particularly keen when the family's culture differs from that of the peer group, as happens so continually and inevitably as a by-product of cultural change and residential mobility. Viewed objectively, the child's prior rating of his peer group is entirely normal and natural. Like calls unto like the world over.

### *The Peer Group as a Security Device.*

The hold of the peer group upon its members is further strengthened in many cases by the very distinctive role which it plays in the modern urban area. By this we refer to the sense of safety and security which it gives the child. To understand the meaning and import of this, certain facts concerning the modern urban community and family need

<sup>22</sup> W. Lloyd Warner and Paul Lunt, *The Social Life of a Modern Community*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1941, p. 351.

to be brought together here for brief recapitulation. The modern urban center tends to be large. The 1940 Census reports that 47.8 per cent of the total population of the United States lived in the nation's 140 metropolitan areas. School buildings and school populations tend to be large. The old-fashioned primary-group community has largely disappeared. Urban life tends to be impersonal. The families of children who go to school together often do not know one another. Populations are mobile, which means that families and their children are coming and going constantly. Among other things, this involves constant dislocations and readjustments of personal relationships among school children. In certain areas and among selected groups, the percentage of population turnover is particularly high. This is true usually of families whose children have, as a whole, more than their share of other problems and difficulties. Combined with all these is the further fact, previously referred to, that the present-day child comes from a small family, which means few if any siblings upon whom to rely.

One result of all this is that the peer group, in one form or other, becomes very important to the child because it gives security to its members. An obvious illustration is the necessity in many areas for white, Negro, Gentile, and Jewish children each to form groups, both for physical safety and for psychological assurance. But there are selective forces other than those which are racial or religious, and the child who stands out because of other characteristics has his problems, too. Moreover, the racketeering practices rife among adults in the past generation have seeped down into the lower age brackets. There are organized gangs in schools which levy taxes for "protection," systematically "invite" other children to "share" their lunches or lunch money, "borrow" written work, and engage in various other similar practices. Against threats and violations of this kind the isolated child is helpless; the peer group offers something, even for those with no immediate problems, that is both important and comforting. Considerations of this kind are often in the background when the child, forced into the cruel dilemma of choice, stands by his peer group against the dictates of his school or home, or both.

### *The Peer Group as a Cultural Entity.*

Each peer group tends to have a culture which is distinctly its own. More specifically, this means that every such group has its own range of activities, its own interests, its own values and choices, which unite

to form the social pattern of the group. The development of this cultural identity begins early in the child's life, with the formation of the play group. The composition of the play group and the content of the play indicate the first steps in this direction; the clique, the gang, and other groups merely carry on at a subsequent level.

The culture of the peer group is in large measure a reflection of the culture of its members and the community from which they come. "The play patterns of the children," writes Murphy in her study of a nursery-school group, "are a mirror of the culture which surrounds them, and this culture provides the raw material for their activity and fantasy."<sup>23</sup> Continuing, she points out that "if we look at these play patterns of the children as an indication of what the children are assimilating from their culture, we find a few outstanding interests predominating over a variety of miscellaneous ones." She groups these in the following way:

1. Domestic patterns, including playing house, furnishing a house, cooking, eating, and having tea parties, taking care of babies, and being fathers and mothers.
2. Selling and buying.
3. Activities connected with transportation, riding in automobiles or trains, being engineers, putting in gas or air, sailing boats.
4. Punishing, playing policeman, and gun play in general.
5. Burning and playing fireman.
6. Killing and dying.
7. Playing the part of legendary persons, Santa Claus, Cinderella, and above all the Big Bad Wolf.<sup>24</sup>

In general, then, the play of children tends to follow the adult patterns. One can readily grasp the national aspects of this. In Spain, children play at bull fighting; in fascist countries, at war games; in England, at cricket; in America, at baseball. The principle is similar for occupational, class, and community patterns. When eight-year-old Mildred plays at making a call and says to her playmate: "Are you following the hounds this fall?" or "Does your husband still spend all his pay envelope on drink?" we know a great deal of the cultural background of the particular group involved. It is this basic fact that has led psychiatrists to utilize the play technique in their analysis of children with behavior problems. The child brings into the peer group the

<sup>23</sup> Murphy, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63.

culture of his family and community as clearly as he brings in the mud on his shoes.

Certain types of children are particularly important in fixing the cultural pattern of their peer groups. In studying the spread of a specific culture trait in a group, Murphy concludes that personalities "unusually intelligent and sensitive to the patterns of adults and aggressive in their social responses, were pivotal points in what might be seen as a process of cultural diffusion."<sup>25</sup> Similarly, the role of the child in the group is highly significant.

Recognition of the role of the peer group's cultural background in determining its pattern of social behavior enables one to understand the role of the gang in criminal behavior. Gangs, it has been pointed out, are characteristic of interstitial areas, of intra-mural frontiers. They arise from the more or less spontaneous effort of boys to create a society for themselves in age spans and social areas where no others adequate to their needs exist. In developing their gangs, boys cannot go beyond their experiences and the observations and activities of their families and other elders, "and hence their codes and chosen activities must be studied with reference to the moral codes and activities they meet in the communities where they live."<sup>26</sup> In other words, just as the gang as a conflict peer group is a symptom of community disorganization, so it is a reflection of the culture of these disorganized areas.

The adult patterns of behavior in the areas in which most delinquent gangs arise and operate are dominated by or literally sprinkled with crime and vice. Many adults are connected with or interested in various forms of racketeering or "easy-money" pursuits of one form or another. Gambling is prevalent, as are stealing, the receipt of stolen goods, begging, panhandling, and the like. These areas will be considered more fully in the next chapter. Reference here is confined to the fact that in so many of these gang-breeding sections not only the overt activities but the argot, the current terminology, the subjects discussed, and all the forms and forces of community conditioning are likely to center around matters which the larger society labels as anti- or non-social.

Furthermore, these areas are isolated from the culture of other areas. The gang member does not have access to the cultural heritages of the dominant social order. The reasons for this are obvious but are often

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 132.

<sup>26</sup> Thrasher, *The Gang*, p. 255.

disregarded. In part they are ethnic, the interstitial areas in which gangs flourish being for the most part first- and second-generation immigrant ones, or areas of first entrance for native migrating groups, such as the Negro, Oriental, Mexican, etc. In part, also, there are class factors, for most of the population of these areas represents a segregation of lower-class persons. Finally, the reasons are developmental in part, for these gangs consist of individuals who are merely in the lower stages of a process of urbanization and social achievement through which other elements in the population have passed successfully. But for the time being, the social isolation and the socially deviant behavior of these sections and their inhabitants combine to call forth philosophies which seek to justify their present social patterns, and these, too, come to be absorbed by the younger boy and girl. Delinquent gangs, then, are a natural product of the social education process in areas where the prevailing patterns are anti-social.

A suggestive illustration of the foregoing is the concept of the socialized delinquency behavior syndrome pattern advanced by Hewitt and Jenkins. Three ideas are basic to this concept. One is the fact that the individual children in many delinquent gangs are well socialized in the sense that they get along well with other children of their own type. Second, the group patterns of behavior to which they are loyal are directed, not against specific persons per se, but against formal property rights and conduct codes established by the larger society. Third, this group pattern is the product of the environment of the gang. In this environment many social deviation pressures are exerted. The homes of these children are located in deteriorated neighborhoods where traditions of delinquency and disrespect for the law are most likely to flourish. Their families offer little in the way of training in conforming to the rules of the larger society.<sup>27</sup> This anti-social group pattern explains the difficulty of dealing with gangs of this kind, as noted by Chambers in his study of New York gangs. According to him:

Juvenile conflict gangs are non-conformist groups. They shy away from supervision. They shun organized agency programs. In fact, they thrive on independence from all outside discipline and authority. Settlement houses, big boys' clubs, and other youth-serving agencies naturally find it difficult to compete with the wild, carefree life of gangs. In the case of those gangs that are enticed into agency buildings, the agencies complain

<sup>27</sup> Lester E. Hewitt and Richard L. Jenkins, *Fundamental Patterns of Maladjustment. The Dynamics of Their Origin*, printed by authority of the State of Illinois, 1946, pp. 28, 29, 43, 44.



that they disrupt programs and that they have a destructive influence on the more conformist members already within the agencies' fold. Moreover, a significant finding of the research is that case work techniques, probation and reform school treatment are unable to get far with the gangs, mainly because they cannot deal effectively with the gang member without first controlling his gang and without at the same time working to change the destructive influences and conditions within the gang boys' environment. Gang controls and attractions are strong, and one fundamental conclusion of the study is that the only way to deal with the individual gang boy is first to reach the whole gang.<sup>28</sup>

One final comment is necessary by way of warning against oversimplification in this connection. The social pattern of each peer group represents its own distinctive combinations of the culture of its members and their communities.

For many years there have been those students who have been impressed by a "novelty of behavior arising from the specific interaction or organization of a number of elements, whether inorganic, organic or mental, which thereby constitute a whole, as distinguished from their mere sum, or 'resultant.'" The simplest illustration of this idea is that of water—a combination of hydrogen and oxygen, in certain definite proportions, and under well-defined conditions, to form a liquid emergent, which exhibits very different properties, i.e., behavior, than either of its gaseous components. The existence and importance of this factor of special relatedness has been recognized by a number of thinkers of the nineteenth century, such as John Stuart Mill, Lester F. Ward, Spaulding, Wundt, and others, and various terms such as "heteropathic causation," "creative synthesis," "evolutionary naturalism," "holism," "organicism," have been used to designate it. Mr. C. L. Morgan's term "emergent evolution" has apparently found most favor among the contemporary philosophers, biologists, sociologists, and the like, who utilize the concept.<sup>29</sup>

For the understanding and successful control of any peer group, this distinctive non-additive character of its cultural pattern must be recognized. For the adult who is called upon to deal with a peer group, access to this distinctive pattern is not an easy matter, for its development is in part an effort to create a life to which the adult is an alien. One of the perennial traditions in most peer groups is the unassimilable alien character of the adult. Yet what the members of the peer group tell each other about subjects which are important to them, such as sex,

<sup>28</sup> Bradford Chambers, in report on Grant No. 845 to the American Philosophical Society. Made available to the author through the kindness of Mr. Chambers.

<sup>29</sup> James H. S. Bossard, "Robert Ellis Thompson—Pioneer Professor in Social Science," *American Journal of Sociology*, September, 1929, pp. 246-247.

their teachers, their studies, etc., often constitutes the core of the problem they present to adult society.

### *The Individual's Role in the Peer Group.*

Thus far the peer group has been considered as a group; it is necessary next to analyze the interactive process within the group, with special reference to the emergence of the individualized roles of its members. In any group containing more than two persons, distinctions and divisions arise, since the members are not equal in nature or ability, nor do they have the same relationships to all the others. Just as the child's behavior cannot be understood without knowing his particular position in the family group, so also is it necessary to know his place in the informal social grouping which he forms with other children.

Three aspects of the process by which the individual role emerges within the peer group can be noted. First, common enterprise entails division of labor. Each peer group exists for certain purposes, and the more important and enduring the group, the more specific and clearly defined these ends will be. In order to bring about their achievement, organization and leadership are necessary, as is specialization of function. Second, the members of the peer group each have their own particular traits, interests, aptitudes, and skills, on the basis of which competition among them for these specialized functions develops. The peer group is a small society, and life within it, as in all societies, is competitive. Third, in the collective experience of the group, individual assignments of roles and functions come to be assessed. A consensus or generalized conception of individual members crystallizes, on the basis of which individual roles are definitely assumed and assigned, to be conformed to or revised on the basis of still further experience. The more complex and varied its activities, the more highly organized and integrated the peer group becomes, and the more distinct and individualized these roles become, until in many such groups every member has his place, his job, and his niche in the group's life.

The status or role gained by the individual member of a peer group may be ascribed by the group on the basis of age, sex, physical appearance, physical prowess, or physical disability, in accordance with the analysis in Chapter XV. In many peer groups, however, there are a democracy of operation and a play of competition which make for a number of achieved statuses or roles. Thrasher has identified some of the better known of these specialized roles in the gang, and to a con-

That some of these specialized roles do not seem to adults to have any particular prestige does not mean that they are so regarded by either the peer group or the individual possessors of these roles. All studies of peer groups emphasize two facts that it is important to note. First, individual status within such a group is for most members a very real and highly important matter, bringing often keen and vivid satisfaction. Not only are these statuses achieved, but they have been gained in the child's own world. They involve recognition by his peers; and many a young boy or girl finds greater satisfaction in being the doorkeeper or errand boy for the gang than to receive the approval of adults. This role in the peer group becomes a powerful determinant in the formation of the child's conception of himself. It is for reasons of this kind, again, that an understanding of these roles is so important for parents, teachers, school attendance officers, probation officers, policemen, and others who deal habitually with children. The second fact is that peer group status has special significance for children whose opportunities otherwise are relatively limited. The boy and girl who have not succeeded in gaining a satisfactory status within their family, whose family is non-existent, inadequate, or in perennial conflict; whose relations with their parents and other older people at home involve a constant struggle against domination or neglect; whose school achievements are nil or unsatisfactory, whose opportunities to engage in other community activities are scant at best—all these and many other types of frustrated and underprivileged children can find in peer groups, especially conflict gangs, the opportunity for individual achievement otherwise denied. As a general rule, the less rewarding and the more drab the child's life outside of the peer group is, the more does a role within the group mean to him. Peer roles are often compensatory achievements affording great satisfaction to boys and girls.

#### DIFFERENTIALS IN THE CHILD'S EXPERIENCE WITH PEER GROUPS

In assessing the nature and role of peer group situations in the process of child development, it is necessary to recognize the differences which prevail in the child's use of and experience with these groups. Two types of factors are particularly important in determining these differences.

First, there are wide variations in the number of years during which the child gives allegiance to peer groups. Keeping in mind the fact that they are transitional groups in the growing-up process, dominating the

period between his social emancipation from his family and his integration into adult society, we see clearly that two variables are active in determining this time span. One is the age of emancipation from the family; the other, that of arrival at adulthood. All kinds of combinations exist, and we can readily identify from common observation types like the following: There is, for example, the child whose emancipation from the family occurs late but whose integration into the adult world takes place at the normal time. Here the period of peer group life is relatively short. By way of contrast is the child for whom the former comes early and the latter is late. Emmy Lou, whose story is recorded in the files of the Carter Foundation, was withdrawn from family life at the age of three, because of the death of her father. She was placed in an institution and remained there in several capacities until her twenty-sixth year, after which she made a slow and rather painful adjustment to adult life. On the whole, in analyzing the available cases, it appears that class differentials also prevail here. The lower the class status, the earlier the social emancipation from the family, and the earlier the entrance into adult life.

Second, the relative social need for peer group activities varies to a considerable extent, and this naturally affects the child's utilization of these groups. Many details and circumstances are involved here, and these, too, seem to vary a good deal on a class basis. There are, for example, such factors as the pressure upon the child to acquire individual skills, involving music lessons, dancing lessons, art instruction, etc., and the resultant time spent in practice; the scope and variety of family activities; and the extent to which community resources are available to the individual child. It will be recalled here that students of peer groups persistently emphasize their development as the result of children's efforts to meet needs not otherwise met. In short, the principle which operates here may be stated something like this: The number, appeal, and utilization of peer groups varies with the appeal and diversity of such competing groups as the family and the community.

If we think of the child's development in terms of process, it is evident that life in the peer group during the growing-up period is, for most children, one of life's major experiences, and that these peer group experiences constitute one of the basic factors in the determination of the adult personality. A selected few phases of this process will be identified briefly.

To begin with, there are the children who have had no, or very little, peer group experience. Perhaps the parents did not permit it, perhaps the circumstances of life did not, perhaps the child's traits led him to avoid it. Such children are often referred to as having had no childhood. What they have not had is experience in living and competing with and being disciplined by equals; growing up, they become adults who associate themselves first with persons much older than themselves, and subsequently, with those much younger. Having been inadequately socialized, they often are rather "difficult" individuals.

Some children make unsuccessful or painful adjustments to their peer groups so that memories of their experiences rankle and smart; but, because they do, there is often a spur to a much greater and more effective effort in the adult world. These are the persons who not infrequently turn out well, to the wonder of their adolescent friends. "I never expected him to turn out the way he did." "I didn't think he had it in him."

At times a lack of success in peer group adjustments is found among children who mature relatively early in life, or who prematurely gain unusual insight into life situations and come to sense the serious imminence of the adult world. The adult world shines through the papier-mâché of the peer group world. These are the young people who are impatient with adolescence. They will not take it in their stride. For this reason they become men before they learn to be boys. To become a man too soon may mean that one becomes a small man.

There are cases, of course, in which life presses hard upon youth. These are the young people who must go to work early in life, who are sobered prematurely by adult responsibilities. Perhaps they rationalize the appeal of the peer group, perhaps they actually are out of sympathy with it, perhaps they cast longing glances at it but are washed past it. When such persons attain financial success as adults, they often leave endowments or make contributions to youth activities in the community.

There are the children whose relations with peer groups are complicated unduly by their parents. The parents may be hard and unsympathetic to these groups; they may seek to keep the child away, tethering him with a silver cord; they may embarrass him whenever other children are about; they may disgrace the family name, or the home may be such that the child will not bring his associates there. Such children tend to marry early, often unwisely, or to affiliate themselves with peer groups which operate surreptitiously.

Finally, there are the children who adjust so well to peer group life, who find so much personal satisfaction therein, that membership in them is continued unduly. Because they find in the peer group what life otherwise denies or makes too difficult for them to obtain, they cling to it. In the gang category and at the anti-social level, such persons perpetuate their gangs, shifting into various "easy-money" activities. Thus emerges the post-adolescent and adult gangster. On the more conventional side, there are the people who grow up to be the joiners, the clubsters, the active organization men. Among college alumni, these are the old grads who never grow up and who insist at times on living at the "house" years after their classmates have vanished into maturity. The world is amazingly full of individuals who have not grown beyond the gang or peer group stage.

#### SUMMARY

1. The term peer is used in this chapter to mean another child, i.e., a non-adult. The peer group is an association of children or youths that operates in the child-youth world, and the chief concern of its members is with each other.

2. Peer groups have been studied too largely in terms of one form, i.e., the gang, and in relation to anti-social behavior. This has created the idea that peer groups are vehicles of crime and delinquency. Recently their larger and more normal aspects have been recognized.

3. The peer groups chiefly discussed are the play group, which is an association, usually of younger children, with common play interests; the clique, a small, intimate social participation group, operating as an instrument of the class structure; and the gang, developed thus far in the literature chiefly as a conflict group, and the product of an interstitial setting.

4. Peer groups are singularly individual. Each is a separate sociological phenomenon. To generalize their development, it is evident that (a) they are social products, (b) they take form on the basis of age gradations, (c) they arise to meet definite needs, (d) their development follows the character of these needs, (e) they have natural histories, and (f) they often reflect racial, national, and religious distinctions of the larger society.

5. Peer groups play an important role in child development (a) through their emphasis upon the rights of others, (b) as agencies con-

trolling their members, (c) as a security device, (d) as a cultural entity, and (e) as a determinant of personality roles.

6. The child's use of and experience with peer groups varies considerably on the basis of (a) the number of years he belongs and (b) his relative need for peer group activities.

7. The child's life in his peer groups is one of life's major experiences, and such experience constitutes one of the basic factors in determining the adult personality.

## The Larger Social Setting for Child Development

The significance of this larger social setting in the development of the child was recognized first in the exaggerated cases of various types of problem children, and this chapter begins with a summary of the conclusions of some outstanding authorities in these fields. Additional topics to be discussed include (1) the increasing importance of the larger social setting, (2) the range of larger social situations, (3) what is important about local social units, and (4) the spirit of an age.

## THE COMMUNITY EMPHASIS IN THE STUDY OF PROBLEM CHILDREN

The earlier stages in the study of human behavior centered largely on the study of problem children, and it is in such cases that the more exaggerated aspects of the operation of various conditioning factors appear. Accordingly, it seems proper to begin with the conclusions of these studies.

In 1928, after surveying child study activities in the United States, the Thomases emphasized the importance of studying human behavior over long periods of time, with particular reference to the institutional aspects of social situations as well as the attitudes and values of other



persons. Such longer studies, they pointed out, would reveal not only the emergence of personality traits but also the formation of life policies. Obviously, the contacts of children in the larger society would be an important phase of these studies.<sup>1</sup>

The following year, Clifford Shaw and others published a study of delinquency areas in Chicago as "an initial phase of a situational approach to the study of delinquency." Shaw pronounced the study "an attempt to relate behavior to the social and cultural setting in which it arises. People live and act in families, clubs, schools, playgrounds, gangs. These groups reflect community life, and the community in turn itself reflects larger cultural and social processes."<sup>2</sup>

In 1934 James S. Plant, director of the Essex County Juvenile Clinic in Newark, New Jersey, emphasized in clear-cut fashion the role of the community in the causation of juvenile delinquency.

The delinquent is not merely an actor, to be assessed by the techniques of an individualistic approach: he is . . . a river, accumulating from all his springs and tributaries the forces and drives that now show themselves. . . . The artifices and shams, the triumphs and tawdry cheapnesses of the community—all of these flow into the child and become a part of him. He who comes to you in agency, school, or clinic brings with him the dirt of his street, or its challenging struggle to some distant goal. . . . As we know him better, the wall of individualization melts away and we see here little more than a section or a part of the community in which he lives. . . . Delinquency is the result of long conditioning, and until we change the community and until we alter the conditions of living of the delinquent, we shall get nowhere with our therapeutic program. . . . Delinquency is a dramatization of our social problems and difficulties.<sup>3</sup>

Finally, we shall cite Dr. William Healy who, after thirty years of specialized studies of juvenile delinquency—studies which ran the gamut of the various individual-centered approaches—wrote (1938): "It would not be difficult to adopt the viewpoint of certain leading sociologists and social psychologists. That would mean starting from the periphery of factors influencing personality and gradually working through concentric areas of influence until the central single personality was reached."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> W. I. and Dorothy S. Thomas, *The Child in America*, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., New York, 1928, p. 571 and chap. 13.

<sup>2</sup> Clifford Shaw and others, *Delinquency Areas*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1929, p. 9.

<sup>3</sup> James S. Plant, in *Annual Proceedings of the National Conference of Social Work*, 1934, pp. 335-338.

<sup>4</sup> William Healy, *Personality in Formation and Action*, W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., New York, 1938, p. 139.

Through the conclusions of these students, we see the efforts to understand the juvenile delinquent taking the form of an insistence that the child cannot be understood apart from his larger cultural setting, and that therapeutic measures directed at delinquency must fail if they overlook this fact.

#### THE INCREASING IMPORTANCE OF THE LARGER SOCIAL SETTING

The role of the larger social setting in child development depends first and foremost on the nature and extent of the child's contact with it. In this respect, marked changes have occurred within the past century, and particularly within recent decades, the effect of which has been to increase greatly the importance of these broader cultural influences. A century ago, most children lived on farms or in small rural communities. Outside of spending a few winter months in school, their life was confined to a large kinship group family, the members of which were engaged in the joint operation of a farm or some small business unit. From an early age, the child joined in this enterprise, learning to make a living, and making one. What recreation and social life there was, was confined to this kinship group and to occasional contacts with a few similar neighboring groups.

As time went on, life became more settled, the population grew, and the child's contacts with persons other than his family increased; but for some further time these were confined to a primary-group neighborhood organization in which everyone knew the child and his parents and other relatives. What contacts he had, outside the large busy family groups, consisted of relatively simple, spontaneous, and occasional gatherings of this immediate primary-group neighborhood. A few social deviants there were, to be sure—wasters, tipplers, and ne'er-do-wells—but they were quickly and definitely identified by a "respectable opinion which was self-confident and uncompromising," and religion thundered to reinforce the demands of a life that was both simple and austere.<sup>5</sup>

During recent decades, this situation, as far as the child's relations are concerned, has changed materially, and over large parts of the country. The factors chiefly responsible for this will be summarized briefly. First has been the emergence of the small, immediate form of family structure which, together with the widespread employment of mothers outside the home and the personal schematization of life of the members of the family, has meant that the child has been turned over

<sup>5</sup> Lowell J. Carr, *Delinquency Control*, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1940, pp. 98-101.

to community agencies earlier in his life and for more extended periods of time. More and more, with the decline of primary-group society, is his life, like that of his parents, parceled out among specialized secondary-group contacts. Second is the increased moving about of the child, both because of the increasing residential mobility of his family and also because of the greater fluidity of all members of society resulting from the emergence of cheap and convenient transportation. To restate the Polish peasant's remark to W. I. Thomas that a neighborhood reached as far as a man was talked about, we might say that today a child's community extends as far as he gets around. Third are the facilities which the child has for making contacts with the world outside his family and peer groups. These include his sense equipment, such as sight, hearing, etc., his verbal equipment, his reading facility, and the visitors to his home. The general assumption seems to be that there are fewer guests today, with the disappearance of old-fashioned familism and the spare bedroom. The data assembled for the guest study summarized in Chapter XI, while not permitting a precise statistical answer, indicate that visiting is not declining but changing. There seems to be more of it in homes as the result of greater home comforts, increased leisure, and the availability of the automobile, but there are fewer overnight and long-continued visits. Today's guest drives twenty miles of an evening to pay a visit; the absence of a spare bedroom is not missed. Finally, in considering the role of the contemporary community, we must recall its changing nature. The modern community is increasingly complex and culturally diversified, and in general lacks the clear-cut cultural stereotypes of an earlier age. In summary, then, we find the child's social horizon enlarging at the very time he is being thrust earlier into larger social situations which have themselves become more complex and diversified.<sup>6</sup>

#### THE RANGE OF LARGER SOCIAL SITUATIONS

The larger social situations which operate in the child's social development have been considered on the basis of various characteristics in the sociological literature of recent decades, and it will serve to in-

<sup>6</sup> For a suggestive treatment of the progressive centralization of contemporary society at the expense of the small community, consult Carle C. Zimmerman, *The Changing Community*, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1938. See also P. A. Sorokin and Carle C. Zimmerman, *Principles of Rural-Urban Sociology*, Henry Holt & Company, Inc., New York, 1929. For an analysis of the changing role of the small town during the depression, see Edmund Brunner and Irving Lorge, *Rural Trends in Depression Years*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1937.

dicating not only the range of such situations but also the complexities of their importance to summarize the chief distinctions which have been made. Without disregarding the importance of such temporary groups as the crowd, the mob, and the audience, this summary is confined to the more permanent groupings of people, based chiefly on physical proximity, but recognizing additional aspects and characteristics.

### *Size of Area.*

As far as size of area is concerned, the terms neighborhood, community, region, and nation are currently the most commonly used.

1. A neighborhood may be defined as a relatively small, generally contiguous area characterized by primary-group relationships. Sometimes it is built up around a single interest or activity, like a country school or a mill, but most often other common interests are present. The greater the number of such bonds, the more distinctive the neighborhood becomes.

Neighborhoods are found in a variety of places and forms. Most common has been the open-country type, in fact, modern usage often makes the term neighborhood synonymous with crossroad and open-country population groupings. This form has been more or less unique in rural America. It has customarily been demarcated by topographical or transportation and communication features, such as a valley or a clearing, or lying on the same side of a river or stream, or being served by a church, school, or "party line" telephone.<sup>7</sup> Neighborhoods of this kind have been the basic social grouping in rural America, according to Young, who says that in pre-industrial times the entire social life of open-country groups centered in them.<sup>8</sup> Although their importance is declining somewhat today, it should be pointed out that in 1940 a total of 47,902,896 persons, or 36.4 per cent of the entire population, lived in unincorporated territory, and that 57,245,573, or 43.5 per cent, were listed by the federal census as rural. Census estimates for April, 1945, were that 8,940,000 children under 14 years of age live on farms. There can be little doubt that, as long as people live in the open country, neighborhood units will persist as a form of group life.

Although urbanization is hostile as a whole to neighborhood life, the two do exist in towns and cities. Especially is this so in residential

<sup>7</sup> J. L. Gillin and J. P. Gillin, *An Introduction to Sociology*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1942, p. 281.

<sup>8</sup> Kimball Young, *Sociology—A Study of Society and Culture*, American Book Company, New York, 1942, p. 137.

areas whose populations are not too large and are characterized by considerable homogeneity and a low rate of mobility. Often the areas around a store or shopping center, particularly in the more outlying parts of a city, develop many features of a neighborhood. Similarly, this may occur in an urban area sharply delimited by some physical or technical features. Carpenter speaks of the development of what he calls pseudo-neighborhoods in urban centers. These are residential areas which have a considerable degree of homogeneity, especially on a racial and ethnic basis. Although too large in area and population to be a primary group in the strict sense of the term, they are characterized by uniformities of attitude and conduct, i.e., ethnic and racial cultural patterns, which operate in a large measure to condition the behavior of the people who live there.<sup>9</sup> Other types of pseudo-neighborhoods, according to Carpenter, form around settlement houses, community centers, and the like. These represent deliberate attempts, initiated by forces originating from outside the areas, to create, preserve, or restore features of neighborhood life. The more successful do achieve "a degree of cohesion and social significance," but since leadership and financial support generally come from the outside, they are not true neighborhoods. Other pseudo-types, limited in scope and degree, may be formed around various improvement, welfare, or other special interests.

Wherever a neighborhood is found, and whatever its form, all students emphasize primary-group characteristics as the essence of it. The true neighborhood is probably more primary than any other group except the family. Whatever other habits of neighborhood life are mentioned, such as habits of borrowing and lending, barter and other simple financial transactions, and common worship, there is general emphasis upon such features as "the social control of gossip," "face-to-face insistence on sticking to the moral code,"<sup>10</sup> and the existence of "a social self-consciousness capable of influencing the behavior of its constituents."<sup>11</sup> In other words, the neighborhood as a primary group is both a defining and a controlling force in the behavior of its members.

From the child's standpoint, two additional facts should be noted. First, for the very young child, the neighborhood is the immediate area

<sup>9</sup>Niles Carpenter, "Neighborhood," *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, vol. xi, p. 357.

<sup>10</sup>Young, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

<sup>11</sup>Carpenter, *op. cit.*, p. 356.

which he first explores outside the home. It is here that the first beyond-the-family sights, sounds, and words are encountered. This neighborhood may be a beautiful park, with children playing under the supervision of their nurses, or it may be the vacant lot alongside of a taproom where men and women go to retch, urinate, fight, and curse. This becomes the basis of the child's earliest imagery and ideation. In the second place, the neighborhood is for many children practically the whole world, and when one's family and kinsfolk merge into it, its power as a defining and controlling force becomes particularly great.<sup>12</sup>

2. The term community has long suffered from a casual and varied usage in which the only common element has been the concept of a natural grouping of people in a relatively small local area. With the acceptance of its use as a definite unit in social work and in scientific studies, various efforts have been made in the past several decades to define and delimit it. Noteworthy as a pioneer effort was that of Charles J. Galpin, who as early as 1915 demonstrated, by a scientific method, how the boundaries of a community can be determined with relative accuracy and objectivity. His method was to locate on a large-scale map the outlying patrons of the business and social institutions of a given center, and thus show the area within which social interaction occurs.<sup>13</sup> Although Galpin's work was concerned primarily with the rural community, it did contribute a very definite technique for identifying the community as a distinct social unit. The writings of Bowman, Steiner, MacIver, Wood, and Sanderson are also suggestive, although employing differing terminology in many respects.

Current textbooks in sociology continue these differences and shades of meaning. Gillen and Gillen use the term community to include all types of local permanent groups based primarily upon physical proximity.<sup>14</sup> Young refers to it as a local grouping of people within a larger society, who carry on among themselves through subsidiary associations various essential forms of activities.<sup>15</sup> Ogburn and Nimkoff speak of it as the total organization of social life within a limited area. Communi-

<sup>12</sup> For an excellent and readable analysis of the neighborhood and its role in juvenile delinquency, the reader is referred to T. Earl Sullenger, *Social Determinants in Juvenile Delinquency*, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, 1936, chap. 3.

<sup>13</sup> Charles J. Galpin, *The Social Anatomy of an Agricultural Community*, Research Bulletin No. 34, Agricultural Experiment Station, University of Wisconsin, Madison, May, 1915.

<sup>14</sup> Gillin and Gillin, *op. cit.*, p. 272.

<sup>15</sup> Young, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

ties are "the loci of group activity, of institutional organization, and of the development of human personality."<sup>16</sup> Perhaps it will suffice here to restate the present author's summary of the essential elements, made a number of years ago. These are: (1) a definite geographical area, (2) a group of people interacting socially, (3) on the basis of certain common interests considered to be important.<sup>17</sup>

The role of the community in child development is relatively important, and it operates in a variety of ways. First, the community is characterized by common patterns of behavior which, as in the case of the neighborhood, are imposed upon the child, both through the definitions of social situations which it gives him, and also through its coercing him into conforming to these definitions. The community not only gives the growing child answers to the questions of life, as revealed in its folkways and mores, but also insists that he accept them. The more compact and primary the community, the greater its influence in these respects. But the community, being larger than the neighborhood, has a more varied life; hence the element of choice presents itself. This is the second function of the community, that, although choices in activities and values are available, it determines and limits the range of such choices, as well as of those that are commonly accepted or not. Implied in this is the further fact that the community's limitation of the range of choice may exclude many activities and values largely or entirely. Finally, the community, which is essentially a culture area, must be considered in terms of its effect upon the family, the school, and the peer group. What this means is that the mode of doing and thinking which characterizes the community is imposed upon, and reflected by, the family, the school, and the peer groups of the child.

3. The region was identified in Chapter VI as a unit part of the larger society. Originally a geographical concept, the region is being increasingly identified in cultural terms. Larger in size than the community and perhaps more generalized in its relation to the behavior development of the child, it is of considerable significance, as was indicated in Chapter VI.

4. The nation, as the territorial unit of the larger society in times

<sup>16</sup> W. F. Ogburn and Meyer Nimkoff, *Sociology*, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1940, p. 395.

<sup>17</sup> James H. S. Bossard, *Social Change and Social Problems*, Harper & Brothers, New York, rev. ed., 1938, p. 50.

past, must be thought of in this connection as having its ethos or national culture pattern which surrounds the child and the smaller units and groups in which he lives. This also was considered in Chapter VI.

### *Cultural Content.*

The growing tendency to see spatial groupings of people in terms of their identifying cultural patterns leads naturally to more direct efforts to identify social units on the basis of cultural characteristics. Such an approach has been aided and abetted within the past generation both by the anthropologists, in their emphasis upon culture areas, and by the social ecologists, in their study of the selective, distributive, and accommodative forces of the environment. In the contemporary United States, this study of the spatial aspects of cultural similarities naturally found racial and ethnic groupings to be highly indicative and significant. More recently, religious and class differences have been viewed in their cultural and spatial aspects.

This utilization of ethnic, racial, religious, and class groupings is the inevitable result of the second generation of the American immigration problem. Consider, for example, such a city as Philadelphia. Here is a city dating back to the seventeenth century, old as American cities go, and conservative and tradition-bound beyond many others. Nor does it compare in heterogeneity of population with such cities as New York and Chicago. Yet in 1940, of its total population of 1,931,334, more than two out of five (41.7 per cent) were of foreign white stock, and almost 13 per cent were Negro. The foreign white stock included 29 national origin groups numbering more than 1000; 15 numbering more than 5000; 12 with more than 10,000; 8 with more than 20,000; 6 with more than 40,000; and 3 with more than 100,000. Maps of Philadelphia indicating the spatial distribution of these groups show that most of them—particularly the German, Irish Free Staters, Italian, Lithuanian, Polish, and Russian groups—live for the most part in compact territorial units which continue with marked persistence during at least the second generation.<sup>18</sup>

Social ecologists have developed the concept of natural areas to identify the spatial units in which live human groups with certain distinguishing characteristics, such as planes of living; age and sex make-up; ratio of children to the population; mobility; rates of divorce,

<sup>18</sup> James H. S. Bossard, *Philadelphia: A Series of Maps in Urban Ecology*, privately published and circulated.



desertion, and the like; race; religion; ethnic origin; occupation; economic status; rate of delinquency; and various others. Each natural area thus tends to be characterized by cultural uniformities which tend to produce their own distinctive social-personality types. Many of these are to be included in Carpenter's pseudo-neighborhoods.<sup>19</sup>

Without minimizing the value of particular but limited studies in this field, it may be said that specific and systematic inquiry into the conditioning processes and consequences of these urban cultural areas has not been made. Certain observations can, however, be made. It is obvious that these areas lack the primary-group character of old-fashioned neighborhoods, with their emphasis upon intimacy and inclusiveness of personal relationships; it is equally clear that the cultural uniformities that obtain tend to constitute cultural pressures of no mean importance. Such areas are the cultural world in which children grow up; their families, neighbors, child friends all tend to reinforce one another's defining and coercing influence. For many of these children, however, this runs counter to another process, namely, conflict with the culture of other areas, some of which have great prestige in their eyes. This culture the young boy and girl may contact in school and other situations. The poignant problem, and tragedy, in the development of many contemporary urban children is that the culture of their homes and of the area in which their ethnic or racial group is segregated is so different from, and often in conflict with, that of their school or of the groups to which they aspire. The following case study is presented as an illustration of such a difference.

#### A CULTURAL AREA GROUPING, AS VIEWED BY A TEACHER<sup>20</sup>

Do you know the difference between C. P. time and W. P. time? Well, neither did I when I began teaching in the Blank School. In my sixteen years' experience of teaching, on the fifth-grade level, children from nine to seventeen years old, I have learned some interesting and significant things concerning the Negro population in an economically "have not" neighborhood. Here I shall discuss briefly their time concept, school attendance, housing, family life, discipline, class distinctions, differences within the neighborhood, mobility, etc.

<sup>19</sup> For a classic statement about these natural areas and groupings, the reader is referred to the late Robert E. Park's contribution to Ernest W. Burgess, *The Urban Community*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1925, chap. 1.

<sup>20</sup> This informal study of a Negro area, from a teacher's point of view, based on sixteen years of continuing contact, was contributed by Frances C. Allen, of Philadelphia, Pa. It is significant in connection with this chapter and with several preceding ones.

C. P. time means Colored People's time; even if they have a clock or a radio in the home, many children reach adolescence and adulthood being late daily for school or job. I learned soon that I had to teach that school began, recessed, and dismissed by W. P. time, White People's time. So also did jobs where people punched the time clock, and radio programs, the movies, and many churches. These colored children are very, very slow. I have a terrific problem of lateness. If I punish too severely, they stay home if they know they will be late. Yet I feel that by teaching and encouraging the use of W. P. time, I am making a contribution to promptness on their jobs some day. Our colored janitor introduced me to the two names for the two kinds of time. I stoop on the first day of school to offering a prize to every child on time for every session during the term. It works; term after term from two-thirds to three-quarters of my class win them for perfect promptness.

So that the youngsters will try for perfect attendance records, I offer a second set of prizes to those who are present every session. This tends to enlist the child's will to eliminate the many reasons for absence that the state calls "parental neglect," such as minding the baby, running errands for the parents, going downtown with mother, the fake headaches and toothaches. And I teach "Better late than never." So about one-quarter of the children win these prizes. Always I have a few children who win both rewards. My principal has for years watched my percentages for attendance and lateness. In the fall, flannel school arm-bands are to be presented on the first day to those children who were present every day and on time every day.

Many of our difficulties arise from the very poor living conditions in the neighborhood. The houses on the main street are large old-fashioned three- and four-storied ones which were owned by an upper class of white people who have since moved to our suburbs. These old houses are rented room by room or floor by floor to Negro families who pay exorbitant weekly rents of \$7.50 to \$10.00 per room. Or three or four large related families will rent one of these houses and all live together.

However, most of our school population comes from much poorer houses on a labyrinth of small narrow streets and alleys, some of which are dead-end streets. These houses are small, ugly, crowded, and in extremely bad condition.

Once when I was studying a boy, I had found out that his greatest fear was of rats. After a home visit, I could understand why. The floors were rotten, there were large cracks and holes in walls and baseboards, plaster was off the walls. No wonder Stanley said the sores on his face and limbs I noticed frequently were caused by rats biting him at night.

Most of the families are large; six or eight children in one unit is very common. There is a paucity of fathers living with their families. Mother or very frequently "aunt" is present, as is grandmother. Indeed, my older girls who have babies tell me confidentially that they are to be "aunts" to the baby and that their own mother will be its "mother." Frequently there are "uncles" or "boarders" in the home.

During the rationing programs the teachers participated in, we were amazed at the dearth of information the adults had concerning the vital statistics of themselves and of members of their families. With the members of Father Divine's Heaven, we had difficulty getting a legal name. (For a year I had in my class "Peace by with you Rabb"; we called him "Peace.") Frequently the adult knew his approximate age and approximate weight. Height was an unknown quantity, as was all the statistics concerning many of the marriage partners and children.

The F. B. I. has complained to the authorities at school concerning the inaccuracies of school records. In the last few years we have had periods of verification. About one-quarter of the children in my class did not know who their father was. Many of those who did know had never seen their fathers. In fact, some mothers took the wartime emergency to contact authorities and to draw allotments. Some children saw their fathers for the first time when the fathers looked them up recently.

While in recent years there is much more money in the family pocket-book, there is a woeful lack of thrift. Far too much money is given to the children. "Come easy, go easy." They are very generous in giving money to their friends. The adults have little wisdom in dispersing their monies. Back in depression days, the children frequently had a mere subsistence diet, yet the family had an expensive radio. Now many poor families have combination radio-phonograph sets and even television. Many homes are heated by coal bought by the bag, or by kerosene stoves.

"Sneaks" are worn the year round by many children because they are cheaper. Many children have no overcoat or winter coat. Sweaters and jackets are piled on layer upon layer. In the winter the underwear is infrequently removed and baths are few and far between. A series of health lessons emphasizing cleanliness is in order. If this fails and the stench gets too bad, more drastic action is indicated. The many years of experience building rapport with the children and their parents established my prestige with the people of the neighborhood so I could use drastic words. Nearly every Friday I announced, "Some one stinks! That is not a polite word. But a few people in this room are dirty, smelly people. I want everyone to go home and undress completely. Take off every single thing. Take a bath with hot water and soap even if it has to be a stand-up one. If you have no clean underwear and clothing, wash that that you have on. Do not put your dirty clothes on again. Etc." When this fails, the teacher sniffs around the room until she localizes the most offending persons for private conversations.

With this lack of cleanliness, poor housing infested with rats, mice, and bedbugs (many are carried into school on clothing and in books), bad diet, late hours, and poor recreational facilities, it is a wonder they stay as well as they do. I claim that they must build up an immunity to many diseases. Those a teacher sees are rheumatic fever, the children's contagious diseases, heart disabilities, venereal diseases, and a variety of skin diseases such as scabies, ringworm, etc.

About half of our children have lived in the same neighborhood all their

lives. Anna May, a large immature 12-year-old, was crying because someone told her there is no Santa Claus. As we talked it over, she said she had never been to see Santa Claus in the downtown Market Street stores. She sobbed, "I ain't neve' been nowhere. I been to de fi' and ten cent sto' at Fotieth Street, I been to de fi' and ten at Fotieth and Blank Street, and I been to de 30th Street Station, and I been down to Lit's on Barnbridge Street. But I ain't neve' been to dem sto's you talk about." And there is this general lack of experience in visiting friends in other parts of the city, of vacation trips, and of day excursions.

The other half of our pupils are those who have moved once or many times. Every term brings a score of new families, usually from the South. This is especially true in election years. During the depression we had families leave Philadelphia, only to return because they could get relief monies easier and employment in our Department of Public Works which had been denied them in several other large northern cities. However, in recent years, many families move but short distances, across the street or down the block. They stay in the same neighborhood.

There are variations in class society within the neighborhood. We have a few children of Post Office service, and of professional families who will not associate with the children of laundry workers, of the domestic service people, or of the D. P. W. employees. Our conflict is intra-racial. There are few white children; these are of poor shoddy "white trash"; they play amiably with the colored children.

Fighting and quarreling are patterns taught by the parents and older brothers and sisters to very young children. Fighting among the adults is a daily street scene. A crowd gathers quickly and the spectators urge the participants. In the school yard, in the halls, in the coat-rooms and the classrooms, the fights begin because, "He say something nasty 'bout my mothe'," or "She call me black nigger." (Both colored children.) Hitting, shoving, calling names, and taking another's property are the other common causes of the very many frequent fights. Razors, razor blades, and knives appear from pockets. This is the most aggressive form of behavior which makes the teachers say, "Do I like teaching? I wish I could teach. I do little but discipline all day every day."

Another difference noted by the children is the variations in color from very light skins through the various shades of brown to black. These form a class basis as they grow older. The children agree that they are "brown" of the "colored" race; they resent bitterly being called "Black" and of the "Negro" race, for to their undiscriminating ear it sounds like "nigger."

A very interesting discussion was provoked some eight or ten years ago. A boy said conversationally, "Teache', if ya' wants to put a good topic on de board for ever'bode' to talk about jes' writes 'Imitation of Life.' Ever'bode' see it. All de kids talkin' 'bout it." I thought it best to see this movie with Claudette Colbert and Hattie MacDonald which treats of the race problem. Hattie MacDonald's daughter resents her Negro ancestry and later is employed as a white person and rejects her mother. With a small group after school, I discussed the movie with my children. Most of them felt the

daughter was wrong in rejecting her mother and race. Ernest, the boy who originally suggested the movie, said, "My mothe', she say if I wants to bleach, and bleach, and bleach my skin, and straighten my hair 'til I can be a white man some day, I can jes' go away. She won't neve' bothe' to look fo' me cuz I's too much trouble. I's too bad. She say she jes' rid of bad rubbidge."

Since there is more wealth in the community this year, more children go more frequently to the movies where they stay until late hours seeing double features, or seeing the show again until the theatre closes. There are few worth-while activities such as Boy Scouts, community centers, recreational activities supplied in the churches, etc. In fact, many of the churches are but unorganized groups in private homes or in rented stores. As parents are more and more occupied in domestic service and in industry, the children turn more and more to the shabby, disorderly, emotional theatres. Good study is doomed by over-stimulation and by late hours.

Perry, who was being taken to task for a misdemeanor, said I was the only one who ever punished him. "My fathe' and my mothe' dey bofe have a job, an' ain' got no time to punish me. Dey neve' do nuffin'." He is but one of a score in my class who are "running wild" due to lack of supervision. One boy is sent or brought to school daily by his baffled parents, yet he had attended only seven sessions of the past term. His constant truancy and association with bad company led to the theft of \$150 recently from a market. I was instructed to promote him despite the lack of any development or growth!

Many children have physical deficiencies which prevent good health so necessary for good development. Four children in my last class who have visual defects have never had glasses; two who have had them supplied by public agencies have lost them; one boy broke his; one girl needs to be reminded constantly to wear them. Scarlet fever has resulted in one child having very bad hearing. Robert is thirteen years old, is five feet ten inches tall, and weighs but one hundred and seven pounds, due to malnutrition. No wonder he is a "slap-happy jitter-bug."

The children have many handicaps. The language equipment they bring to school is very inferior. Many talk in a "mumbo jumbo" under their breath or softly to themselves continuously through the hours in the classroom. Their poor enunciation makes it difficult for teachers, clerks, etc., to understand them. The "lazylips" and the poor ability of expression make for bad reading, poor spelling, and hopeless written work. Even adolescents are sometimes so unable at expression and so embarrassed, they answer questions in one word or in a brief and terse sentence.

Parents do teach superficial manners. "Yes, Mam!" "Pardon me." "Good evenin', Mis' Allen." This comes largely from imitation of those in domestic service.

I contend that these children are unmoral rather than immoral. We have a small hold-up and tribute problem where weaker children are coerced into giving money, cakes, pretzels, and pencils to certain bullies. Their culture holds unusual views concerning honesty and sex. The children just do not

know the difference between a Miss and a Mrs. In fact, they almost always use them exactly reversed. It is out of their experience that a marriage takes place usually before a child is born. Notes, drawings, and the actions of the older girls, who mature very early, show great interest in sex.

The lives of our children are barren of praise and encouragement. Numerous children in poor, crowded homes make many parents impatient. They need praise for their merest achievement. It is necessary to have much sympathy, tolerance, and patience. Perhaps praise denotes two levels. I think I like better to "Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep."

Many of the emotions the child learns early in life from his family. Fear of lightning, of the dark, of snakes, etc., is all acquired from those in the home. The child with emotionally stable parents will have more of a chance at developing into an emotionally adjusted youth. Similarly, emotions of maladjusted and temperamental teachers are contagious in the classroom.

These children can, and may, see the intellectual reason, the why, for studying a lesson. One of the psychological needs is effective effort—doing something that has an outcome, and doing it for that outcome. The feeling of joy of accomplishment follows such effort. In recent years, my efforts have been to fulfill this need in shop periods, by the project method, unit organization, and in clubs. However, the task the teacher sets must be adjusted to the abilities of the children. They lose interest if the game or problem is too easy. The task must not be too difficult for the capabilities of the children; they must be able to solve the problem, or to play the game, with a fair output of effort.

All children, and our children especially, desire to be members of a group, and they want prestige and position in that group. This may be determined by property, charm, birth, or conformity. Every child must excel at something, and the wise teacher finds the "something." It may be the ability to collect books quietly, or to lead the class in singing. But no matter what the "ability," it gives him status with his group. He needs the approval of those whom he admires.

It is criminal to encourage a child to do what is beyond his powers. Great harm is done by accepting defeat too soon. Pupils should not form the habits of anxiety fostered by many systems of examination. Hope, faith, and confidence are stages in assurance.

In our school we can avoid arousing the anger responses by not thwarting a legitimate need, by not refusing a natural request, by not lessening the regard of others with the use of sarcasm. A successful teacher may work for an intellectual understanding of the fairness of her refusal. Frequently, a friendly talk after a "cooling off" period will modify an emotion. "It is as unethical for a teacher to become angry with a pupil as it would be for a physician to fly into a rage at a patient."

Chronic or intense emotional excitement results from fatigue, indigestion, and irritability. Adolescents are strained, exhausted, and emotionally abnormal after witnessing a tense, exciting athletic contest. This emotional

strain affects overt behavior and the internal physical condition. The teacher should watch out for signs of emotional strain resulting from over-work or over-activity. She must keep her children free from emotional tenseness, and realize that "normal growth and development are more important than the multiplication table."

As fear is the most terrific destroyer of mental health, I strive to reduce these jitters by trying to establish the child's emotions of well-being, of happiness, and of "good feeling." We must challenge his curiosity, stir his constructive desires, foster his worthy ambitions, and redirect his unworthy ones by establishing attitudes of good citizenship and tolerance. He needs to feel satisfaction; it may be that a boy's gadgets are his only means for recognition. He needs to be made to feel secure in his group. If a teacher is sensitive to normal delinquencies, if she is "shock proof," if she has earned respect by being fair, if she is relaxed and has fun, if she has many personal relationships with individual children, and if she provides some play activities, she can make better provision to meet the present and future needs of these colored children.

### *Specialized Types.*

Conceiving of spatial social groupings around some one outstanding factor such as race, ethnic origin, or religious culture suggests their consideration, too, in terms of type of specialized function or stage of development. Many communities and parts of cities derive their essential nature primarily from their specific place or function in a larger configuration. Of the many illustrations that could be cited, three will suffice.

1. The interstitial area, identified by social ecologists, is one whose distinctness results from its place in the changing urban pattern. It is an intervening area, usually between a residential and a business or industrial section, involving fissures and breaks in the social organization in which all kinds of debris and foreign matter tend to collect and cake. Its characteristics may be identified in terms of changing structures and utilities, with the chief emphasis upon physical deterioration; or in transitional terms, with reference to residential recession and business encroachment; or in population terms, pointing out the high rates of mobility or the preponderance of "first entry" groups; or in terms of personal and social disorganization, with the attendant high rates of delinquency, crime, physical disease, mental disorders, alcoholism, sexual irregularities, and the like.

Combining this concept with that of the intra-mural frontier, Thrasher points out how the gang as a conflict and often delinquent group emerges as an inevitable product. It is in these areas, he says,

that we find deteriorating neighborhoods, great mobility, areas of immigrant first settlement, corrupt ward politics, vice, crime, and general disorder. The basic reason, however, for the development of gangs in these areas is the neglect of boyhood through the failure of customary social situations to function in such a way as to organize the life of the boy. . . . Life in Chicago is in constant ferment physically, economically, culturally. The city is in the midst of a process of building, rearrangement, and expansion. There is break-neck competition for the economic gains which grow out of this process. Three-fourths of the population is composed of foreign-born peoples and their immediate progeny. These diverse cultural elements have added greatly to the general confusion. . . . There has not yet been time for adjustment among these diverse elements and for the development of a consistent, and self-controlled social order. The gang is one symptom of the "cultural lag." . . . In describing in a summary way the underlying conditions of disorganization in gang areas, we are simply attempting to explain the factors which make possible the freedom which leads to ganging. We are merely describing the soil which favors the growth of gangs. Such underlying conditions as inadequate family life, poverty, deteriorating neighborhoods, and ineffective religion, education, and recreation must be considered as together constituting a situation complex which forms the matrix of gang development.<sup>21</sup>

2. Another specialized type grows out of the relationship of a smaller satellite community to a metropolitan center. Representative of this type is the suburb of the modern city, the product in recent decades of the overflow of cities as well as of the drift out of the older sections of urban centers into the surrounding countryside. Such suburbs are similar in a number of respects. (a) The husbands are employed in the urban center, leaving home in the morning and returning in the evening, perhaps only to sleep—all of which means that they have relatively little contact with their children. (b) Contacts between the men tend to be limited and sporadic. Their interests in community affairs are often casual and distinctly secondary to their interests in the life of the larger city. As a result, many suburban communities are rather loosely integrated, functioning as such only in regard to some exceptionally challenging matter. (c) The life of the suburb is dominated as a rule by women, the extent and nature of their activities and integration being dependent on the socioeconomic status of the particular community. The local woman's club or some one or two churches frequently become the center of communal life. Because of this dominance by women, coupled with the relative absence of men, the suburb has been called the American matriarchal bedroom village. (d) This

<sup>21</sup> Frederic M. Thrasher, "The Gang as a Symptom of Community Disorganization," *Journal of Applied Sociology*, September-October, 1926, pp. 3-21.



predominance of women, usually mothers of children, and their communal integration often result in an active community interest and participation in child study and child welfare activities.<sup>22</sup>

3. A short case study of the town of Terminal (fictitious name) is included here as an illustration of a third type of community whose life and child development problems result from its specialized function.

Terminal is an industrial town of approximately 4000 people. Physically it is shaped somewhat like a bowl. The business district is the bottom center of the bowl, toward which the main streets slope. Four bus or trolley lines have their terminal in this central district, and this has stimulated its development as a shopping and recreational center. A large proportion of the men in Terminal are employed in a nearby industry which operates on three shifts. The workers from Terminal prefer the shift from four in the afternoon to midnight. They arrive in the downtown district of Terminal shortly after midnight. The custom that has developed through the years is for the families of the workers on this shift to "go downtown" in the evening to shop or go to the movies, and then to "wait up for the men." The result is that downtown Terminal is relatively crowded and active until about one A.M. It is said to be a tradition among many Terminal families that no one thinks of "going to bed before one." One hears this constantly from the children. The streets, drug stores, movies, and various other places in downtown Terminal are relatively crowded with children during the evening every day in the week. The teachers and school authorities make constant references to the fact that the children continually fall asleep during school hours, and that a good many problems of school behavior are created by the night life of so many of these young people.

### *Ethical and Social Evaluation.*

Smaller groups and social units have frequently been classified on the basis of ethical and social criteria. Particularly has this characterized studies dealing with delinquency and other forms of social deviation. For a number of years, attempts have been made to measure neighborhoods and communities on a scale of "goodness" and "badness." The Whittier State School pioneered in studies of this kind, and sought to develop a rating scale based on neatness, sanitation, civic improvements,

<sup>22</sup> Carl Von Rhode, "The Suburban Mind," *Harper's Magazine*, April, 1946, pp. 289-299.

playground facilities, establishments of "moral consequence," social status of residents, and average quality of homes.<sup>23</sup>

By way of further illustration, the differentials noted by the Gluecks in their study of a thousand juvenile delinquents will be cited. Utilizing the concept of the neighborhood as the local unit, they identified three types of neighborhoods: the good, the poor, and the fair. A good or favorable neighborhood is one in which there are no street gangs, no centers of vice or crime within a radius of two blocks, and in which there is opportunity for wholesome recreation within easy walking distance, such as public playgrounds, school or community centers, parks, etc. Poor neighborhoods embody the opposite of these criteria, with corner gangs, and centers of vice or crime within two blocks; whether or not facilities for wholesome recreation exist within walking distance makes no difference. Fair neighborhoods contain no street gangs and no nearby centers of vice or crime, but offer no opportunities for wholesome recreation within walking distance.<sup>24</sup> It might be added that of 911 cases in which this factor was known and classifiable, 25 families (2.8 per cent) lived in favorable neighborhoods; 104 (11.4 per cent) in those classified as fair; and 782 (85.8 per cent) in unfavorable ones.<sup>25</sup>

#### WHAT IS IMPORTANT ABOUT LOCAL SOCIAL UNITS?

The various definitions and distinctions in the foregoing pages naturally raise questions concerning what it is important to consider about local social units in relation to child development. Two contrasting approaches may be distinguished in the sociological literature. One involves an effort to identify and isolate specific aspects or components of the life of the local area, and to study and evaluate their relation to the development of behavior patterns. This has been done most assiduously in the study of crime and delinquency, with the establishment of correlates to various specific aspects of community life.<sup>26</sup> Relatively little has been achieved on the more positive side to answer

<sup>23</sup> J. H. Williams, "The Intelligence of the Delinquent Boy," *Journal of Delinquency Monographs*, No. 1, 1919, pp. 167-174.

<sup>24</sup> Sheldon and Eleanor T. Glueck, *One Thousand Juvenile Delinquents*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1934, pp. 72, 327.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 72.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. T. Earl Sullenger, *Social Determinants in Juvenile Delinquency*, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, 1936, chap. 3; Walter C. Reckless and Matheus Smith, *Juvenile Delinquency*, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., New York, 1932, chap. 5, E. D. Sutherland, *Principles of Criminology*, J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia, 1939.

the question: What features about a local social unit facilitate child development on a socially acceptable basis? Why, specifically, do certain areas have no or very little juvenile delinquency? This seems to be as legitimate a problem for scientific investigation as the reverse relationship. Do certain forms of socially acceptable behavior predominate in certain areas? This, too, appears to be a legitimate inquiry for social ecologists. What are the features of communal life and organization in such areas?

The other approach to the study of local social areas is in terms of the total situation as a whole. A number of students have stressed the importance of such an emphasis. Sorokin, for example, in comparing the culture of present and past eras, protests against a conception which makes a great culture "a mere dumping place of a multitude of diverse cultural phenomena, existing side by side and unrelated to one another," and insists that it represents "a unity or individuality whose parts are permeated by the same fundamental principle and articulate the same basic value."<sup>27</sup> Manifestly, this would be applicable, in principle at least, to smaller units that have their own distinctive cultures.

This same conception seems to inhere in Angell's work on the social integration of selected American cities. "One of the most important questions we can ask about a human aggregate of any kind is whether its members are closely knit together by a common outlook and common aspiration."<sup>28</sup> Utilizing material published by the Federal Children's Bureau on health and welfare activities of twenty-eight urban areas, he suggests the hypothesis that "welfare effort and crime are good indicators of the degree of integration of large urban communities. . . . It is found that twenty of the twenty-eight cities and urban areas are quite consistent in the sense that they either have a high Welfare Effort Index and a low Crime Index, moderate indexes in each, or a low Welfare Effort Index and a high Crime Index."<sup>29</sup> His hypotheses on what produces social integration are tentative but highly suggestive, and have a particular bearing upon the questions proposed in the first paragraph of this section. Stated in summary form, they are as follows: The social integration of a city tends to be greater (1) the more the schools, libraries, and recreational facilities have been supported in the past; (2) the greater the proportion of native whites to Negroes,

<sup>27</sup> P. A. Sorokin, *The Crisis of Our Age*, E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., New York, 1941, p. 17.

<sup>28</sup> Robert C. Angell, "The Social Integration of Selected American Cities," *American Journal of Sociology*, January, 1942, p. 575.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 580.

Oriental, and Mexicans; (3) the fewer the mothers who are gainfully employed; and, possibly, (4) the less the disparity of income among the various social classes.<sup>30</sup>

Finally, we may cite the conclusions of Healy and Bronner, who, in their older but penetrating study of 4000 juvenile delinquents in Chicago and Boston, recognize the over-all unity and character of a social unit. "We have long been thoroughly persuaded that one of the most important phases of the situation with regard to delinquency anywhere is the spirit of the community, difficult as this may be to define. . . . The moral spirit of a community is easily reflected in the conduct of its children."<sup>31</sup> This spirit is a manifold product. Some of the criteria that measure and some of the forces that produce it are of a kind that yield to the cold and cautious treatment of a statistical table, but many of them of necessity are not. "Inherent in our data," Healy and Bronner point out, "is the implication that there are many intangible, imponderable elements in community life that influence the ideas and mental attitudes of young people in ways that are productive of delinquency and crime."<sup>32</sup> What they have in mind when they speak of the spirit of the community consists essentially of the mental attitudes and interests of the people, their sense of values, and their vision of what is the right thing to do, with particular reference to the traditions of public conduct and private behavior which a community sets as an example before its young people, and the public opinion which prevails toward "all good efforts in behalf of childhood and youth." Children are quick to sense what the actual rather than the professed values of the people in a community really are; they see and hear in a multitude of ways what the behavior patterns of adults are. It is from these that they take their cue in their own development.<sup>33</sup>

#### THE SPIRIT OF AN AGE

The smaller social units with which child and youth come most intimately in contact reflect, of course, the national and even the world

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 589.

<sup>31</sup> William Healy and Augusta F. Bronner, *Delinquents and Criminals: Their Making and Unmaking*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1926, pp. 190-191.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 211.

<sup>33</sup> For several suggestive recent articles on the role of the community in child development, with particular reference to the interests of the teacher, the reader is referred to the *Journal of Educational Sociology*, January, 1947.

society of which they are a part. If, then, one takes a bird's-eye rather than a worm's-eye view, he sees whole nations and eras characterized by sweeping patterns of attitudes and values and overt behavior which environ, almost like the air they breathe, the mass of childhood and youth. Certainly this has been evident in Fascist Italy, Nazi Germany, and Communist Russia where, over a period of years, the young people grew up in a manipulated environment in which ideological slogans were chanted with stimulated emotion, where political shibboleths took the form and place of religious creeds, and where patterns of state-decreed behavior were imposed upon the rising generation with vehement foresight. To make a generalized approach, it is interesting to summarize the headlines of mass behavior which characterized the period from the end of the First to the end of the Second World War, during which time an entire generation came to adulthood. Eleven such headlines will be identified briefly.

1. The period began with the economic florescence of the nineteen-twenties. The productive and consuming capacity of the United States, which had been geared to a high level during the First World War, was maintained in the decade that followed. Many factors combined to make this possible. First, our own construction program for homes, public buildings, and business plants, delayed during the war, was now carried forward. Second, large loans were made to foreign countries, and this money was in turn spent here. Third, our consumer capacity was expanded through an increase in installment buying from 1.5 to 9 billion dollars—a sizable discount on future income. Fourth, from 1922 to 1929, billions of dollars of profits, made through speculation on the stock market or in real estate sales, were used to purchase consumption goods. The over-all result was a high plane of exaggerated prosperity which in turn bred cultural values and pressures and aspirations that in retrospect appear as grandiose as they were abnormal and unsound. Nevertheless, the decade following the abrupt termination of this era was tormented with dreams about the return of those "happy days."

2. In 1929, with a suddenness that to many seemed to come like a thunderbolt out of a clear sky, a stock market crash precipitated the worst depression in the history of this country and perhaps of the entire modern world. So swift and sweeping was the crash that millions jumped to the conclusion that the capitalist system was at an end; and when the gold standard, which for decades had been regarded as the

financial Rock of Gibraltar, was abandoned and managed currencies were substituted, concrete symbolic proof seemed at hand.

3. Beginning in 1933, the most elaborate relief system ever conceived in the mind of man was established in this country. This came to include the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, the Civil Works Administration, the Works Progress Administration, the Resettlement Administration, the Civilian Conservation Corps Camps, the National Youth Administration, the public assistance provisions under the Social Security Act, and various other agencies. Ultimately, and for some years, in excess of 20 per cent, and at times more than 30 per cent, of the population was maintained at public expense. A small part of this elaborate "spending program" was financed by public taxation; its chief source was federal borrowing, as a result of which the debt of the federal government alone increased from about 19.5 billion dollars in 1932 to 36.5 billions in 1937. Spend and tax and elect were the tactics of the political party in power.

4. In Russia, the most comprehensive, revolutionary, and thoroughly planned economic-social experiment in the history of the world took form. In general terms, this program involved one-seventh of the land area of the globe and included some 200 million persons. During the period between the two World Wars, the experiment executed its first, second, and third five-year programs, to the dismay of ideological opponents and the alarm of international enemies. First anathematized as a world source of iniquitous ideologies, then flayed as a world menace during her war with Finland and her alliance with Germany, Russia was accepted by the United States almost overnight as an ally and collaborator in a war of righteousness.

5. In Germany and Italy, reactionary ideologies took form and subsequently gained possession of the organized instrumentalities of the entire society. At first ridiculed within and without their homelands, the leaders of this new movement speedily gained the support of their own people and challenged the dominant power of other nations. This new ideology was especially critical and contemptuous of the democracies of the world, who were pilloried and made to appear for a time as decadent. German and Italian youth in particular espoused these new ideas.

6. In international affairs, the period saw some of the most unprincipled aggressions in history—the Japanese incident in China, the Italian invasions of Ethiopia and Albania; the dress rehearsals in Spain

and Finland; and finally the German attacks upon Holland, Norway, Yugoslavia, etc. Few if any periods in history have witnessed such complete slumps in international law and morality. Treaties were made between obvious enemies, as calculated periods for preparation, to be considered at the opportune moment as mere scraps of paper. World opinion stood aghast and seemingly helpless, and almost to the end spoke of "peace in our time." In June, 1941, the League of Nations closed its doors.

7. One of the most widely read books since the invention of printing, *Mein Kampf*, written by the acknowledged leader of one of the offending nations in the foregoing respect, advocated, among many other similar ideas, the telling of lies as an essential part of national policy, with added emphasis that the bigger the lie and the more insistently repeated, the better and the more effective. Despite the lucidity of this frankness, complacent millions believed Hitler's lies without apparent hesitation, as if hypnotized by the sheer audacity of his performance.

8. Established religious institutions were subjected to considerable molestation during this period. In Russia, the new state was frankly scornful and antagonistic, and systematically eliminated many of the features of her traditional religious life. It was not until February, 1945, that the Sobor or international conference of the Russian Orthodox Church, the first since the Revolution, was held, a government decree of July, 1944, having restored freedom of worship to Soviet citizens. In Italy and Germany, especially the latter, the authoritarian state not only sought to restrain established centers and forms of worship but also projected competing doctrines, particularly upon the young. The higher patriotism in each of these three countries excluded or was at best indifferent to historic religious principles; the good citizen was no longer also a good Christian.

9. In 1939, the Second World War began, signalized by the almost miraculous achievements of the German military forces. Subsequent insight showed that this was the result of their complete and effective mechanization, an innovation which forced upon other nations and the world a new epoch in the science and art of waging of war. Military operations henceforth became long range, totalitarian, and impersonal. Aerial warfare on helpless civilian populations far removed from the "front line" became part of the new code and craft which found its highest perfection in the development of the atomic bomb.

10. One of the greatest refugee problems in human history developed toward the close of the period under consideration. Earlier, thousands of people fled from Fascist Italy; then, millions from Nazi Germany; still later, more millions were displaced by military invasion and the ebb and flow of battle. Meanwhile, more than sixty million Chinese had fled from the coastal areas into the interior of that unhappy land.

11. Finally, to turn again to the United States, a sudden attack by the Japanese upon Pearl Harbor, similar in nature to those made by the other "New Order" nations, drew us into the most serious and costly war in our history. As one aspect of this war effort, somewhere between one-third and one-fourth of our country's entire population were wrested from their traditional moorings and plunged into new places, new activities, and new preoccupations. Many old landmarks disappeared as if by magic. Some of these were physical, like the homes left by departing servicemen; some were traditions, like that of a two-term tenure for Presidents. Millions of young American men and women turned up in all parts of the world; millions of families, insulated until yesterday in their provincial satisfactions and problems, now heard from their own younger members about new modes of life in strange places which only their old school geographies enabled them to identify.

The present generation is perhaps still too close to this era to assess its true nature and significance. One point of agreement, however, is obvious. It was a period of many revolutionary changes. Some of these were mechanical, but others involved aspects of life directly contributory to the so-called verities of life. Certainly to young persons growing up in this period, it must have seemed that nothing remained true to itself.

What is the significance for child development of such upheavals in the larger social situation? Who can say, and how shall one determine? At this immediate writing, the author recalls, after the lapse of a half century, the events leading up to our declaration of war against Spain. A flood of memories reappears in the form of vivid visual recollections. Where have these been stored in the interval? What has been their significance during the decades when they were "forgotten"? Some of them return with such emotional overtones that they could not conceivably have lain dormant in a vague hinterland through half a century. Is any life experience or impression ever lost in the ongoing process of personality formation and change?



Many factors determine the significance, in child and youth development, of social situations of the nature and scope indicated in the foregoing analysis. One undoubtedly is the extent to which aspects of such situations come to the attention of young persons. Children differ markedly in the degree of their exposure to and insulation from prevailing social and intellectual stimuli. Class status, verbal equipment, nature of home life, and various other differentials are important here. Relatively, and in the main, the social horizon of all our children has been tremendously enlarged during recent years by the radio, visual aids in education, changing national interests, etc., so that larger social situations now have a significance for children considerably greater than would have been the case a generation ago. Again, how aspects of the larger social life are presented to the young is highly important. Stimuli are colored by the media through which they pass. It is in their transmitting and evaluating role that the family, school, radio, cinema, and other agencies assume major importance here. Rarely if ever do impressions come to one without accompanying overtones of meaning and emotion. These naturally have most weight during childhood. A final factor in determining the significance of larger social situations is the past history of the child. What has he already heard, seen, and experienced? With what residue may the new stimuli be compared? What is his threshold of resistance to the new ideas? It is on the basis of past experience that one evaluates the present impression.

#### SUMMARY

1. The behavior patterns of the child cannot be understood apart from the cultural background in which he develops and in which such directly conditioning factors as family, school, and peer groups operate.
2. Earlier studies of problem children revealed the more exaggerated aspects of this community cultural background.
3. The social unit which comprehends the child's cultural contacts has enlarged considerably within recent decades.
4. These larger social situations may be considered on the basis of size of area, cultural content, type of specialized social function, or ethical and social valuation.
5. Mature insight into the role of these larger situations emphasizes the importance of the intangible aspects of social life—the mental attitudes and interests of the people, their sense of values, their idea of what is the right thing to do, the traditions of public conduct, and the public opinion which prevails in regard to childhood and youth.

## War and Child Development<sup>1</sup>

There are two particular reasons for including a chapter on war in a contemporary volume devoted to child development. One is the obvious fact that this country has just passed through a major war involving more persons and greater efforts than any conflict in its history; the other is the recurrence of war, not only in this but in all the great nations of the past. It seems pertinent to begin this chapter with a summary of the facts on the recurrence of war because such facts imply the recurrence of war as a factor in child development. The remainder of the chapter is devoted to an analysis of selected effects of war upon the family, such as have particular meaning for children, and then to a consideration of certain direct effects upon child development.

### THE RECURRENT ROLE OF WAR

Each generation in the history of the United States has witnessed the reality of war. From 1776 to 1946, we have been engaged in seven major wars, an average of one for every quarter of a century. We have been at war during some twenty-four of the more than 170 years of our national existence. Our longest interval of peace was thirty-three years—

<sup>1</sup>In the preparation of this chapter, the author has drawn upon his various earlier publications dealing with war and the family. Special mention should be made of "The Family in Past Wars," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, September, 1943, pp. 1-10, "Family Backgrounds of War-time Adolescents," *ibid.*, November, 1944, pp. 33-42, and "Family Problems in Wartime," *Psychiatry*, February, 1944, pp. 65-72. Parts of these articles are reproduced, with permission, in this chapter. The latter part of the chapter, under the heading of War and Selected Effects upon Children, was contributed by Mrs. Eleanor S. Boll and is reprinted, with permission, from "The Child," *Annals*, September, 1943, pp. 69-79. The reader is also referred to a chapter prepared by the author, with the aid of Mrs. Boll, on "The Family, the War, and Its Aftermath," in Howard Becker and Reuben Hill, *Family, Marriage, and Parenthood*, D. C. Heath Company, Boston, 1948.

the period between the end of the Civil War and the Spanish-American War.

This record of a peace-loving, relatively isolated people preoccupied with the exploration of a virgin continent is curiously paralleled by the experience of the leading nations of Europe during their much longer histories. An analysis of 950 years in the history of France shows that the French were at war in more than 80 per cent of those years, and that of the 34 quarter-centuries in that period, only one was without an important war. Similarly, of the 35 quarter-century periods in English history, only one saw no important war, and of the 875 years included, 72 per cent were war years.<sup>2</sup> Under feudalism, war was the respectable method of business enterprise. For centuries, a war with France was the chief method by which an English gentleman could become rich. The division of booty was like the contemporary declaration of dividends. In the period of the origination of nationality, war was the established mechanism of nation-making. Nations are seldom born except as a by-product of war. After finding some 967 wars in world history in recorded times, Sorokin concludes that war phenomena are almost as common and normal as those of peace. Almost every generation in the past, he points out, has been a witness of or an actor in war.<sup>3</sup>

Delving into still earlier periods, we find the frequency of war even more evident. Warfare was both constant and inevitable among tribes subsisting upon the free products of nature; it was the corollary of getting food. For the Greeks war was a business enterprise, it existed by "nature"; peace had to be established by a special treaty. To Rome, an inland city, war was the only possible form of business expansion. The Germanic tribes glorified war with naive directness while Rome was busy cloaking her squabbles with plausible pretexts.

#### WAR'S INCREASING ROLE IN SOCIETY

Not only is war a constant factor of periodic recurrence, but, with the passing of time, it plays an increasing role in society. In his recently published comprehensive work on war,<sup>4</sup> Quincy Wright, after acknowledging various difficulties resulting from incomplete historic data and oscillations in the life of particular nations, identifies the fol-

<sup>2</sup> P. A. Sorokin, *Social and Cultural Dynamics*, American Book Company, New York, 1937, vol. iii, pp. 309-316.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 360-362.

<sup>4</sup> Quincy Wright, *A Study of War*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1942.

lowing long-range trends: (1) Armies have tended to grow larger, both absolutely and in relation to the population; (2) war tends to become more costly in life and wealth; (3) military activity is more concentrated in time; and (4) war tends to become more extended in space, with fewer places of safety and more inconvenience for civilians (vol. i, pp. 119-125). He finds that among the majority of primitive people, war is essentially conservative, but that modern warfare becomes more dynamic, more disorganizing, and has greater social effects (p. 126). Its destructiveness has had an upward tendency (p. 378), and stands out more and more as a recurrent catastrophe in civilized human existence. The more prolonged and destructive a war, the more changed is the world when it is over (p. 128).

These facts concerning the recurrent frequency of war and its increasing role in the life of nations are summarized here as a necessary background for a discussion of its effects upon the family and the child.

#### WAR AND SELECTED FAMILY CHANGES

Because families consist of people and because war, especially in the modern totalitarian form, affects most people, there is scarcely any aspect of family life which does not come within the range of its repercussions. Considered sociologically, war is a complex of comprehensive changes involving the reorganization of the entire societal pattern; since the family is part and parcel of organic civilization, family changes in wartime are inevitable. Once these basic facts are recognized, we are in a position to appreciate the importance for the family of a national struggle of the scope of World War II, with which this chapter is concerned primarily. Selected aspects of these wartime changes of particular significance for child development are summarized at this point.

##### *War Accelerates the Rate of Family Formation.*

The soldier who marries and rides away to war has been a favorite theme for writers of historical fiction; modern statistics confirm the prevalence of this fact. A rise in the marriage rate of a nation invariably accompanies its involvement in a war. As the war continues and its activities withdraw large numbers of eligible males from social contacts with women, and as feelings of uncertainty and insecurity come to prevail, the rate falls. With the end of the war, there is a swift re-

covery. The marriage rate apparently is a relatively resilient demographic characteristic.

For World War II, the following facts and Table describe tersely the wartime changes in marriage rates in the United States. Hostilities between the European participants began in September, 1939. Almost at once there was an upswing of the business cycle in this country. In September, 1940, the Selective Training and Service Act was passed, and our own military preparations began. In December, 1941, a state of war was declared by the Congress. The successful termination of hostilities came during the spring and summer of 1945. With these dates in mind, we can see from Table 6—marriage rates for the United States for a twelve-year period—the stark story of wartime changes in the marriage rate. It is evident from this table that first wartime prosperity and second our entrance into the war resulted in a marked acceleration of the marriage rate. Between 1940 and 1943 a total of

TABLE 6. Marriage Rates, per 1000 Population, 1935-1946<sup>5</sup>

|                 |      |                |      |
|-----------------|------|----------------|------|
| 1935... . . . . | 10.4 | 1941           | 12.6 |
| 1936 . . . . .  | 10.7 | 1942 . . . . . | 13.1 |
| 1937. . . . .   | 11.2 | 1943 . . . . . | 11.8 |
| 1938 . . . . .  | 10.2 | 1944 . . . . . | 10.9 |
| 1939. . . . .   | 10.5 | 1945 . . . . . | 12.3 |
| 1940.. . . . .  | 11.9 | 1946 . . . . . | 16.3 |

6,579,000 marriages took place, a surplus of about 1,118,000 over what would have been expected under normal peacetime conditions.<sup>6</sup> Following the end of the war, first in Europe and then in the Pacific, and the return of the military personnel to the United States, the marriage rate took a sharp upturn.

Two wartime changes in age at marriage are of possible significance in the present connection. One was the sharp increase in the number of younger men who married. Records for New York State, exclusive of New York City, indicate that nearly three times as many boys under 20 were married in 1942 as were married in 1939. The rise was par-

<sup>5</sup> *Marriage and Divorce in the United States, 1937 to 1945*, National Office of Vital Statistics, Federal Security Agency, vol. xxiii, no. 9, September 10, 1946, and no. 10, October 22, 1947.

<sup>6</sup> Bureau of the Census Release, "The Wartime Marriage Surplus," Series PM-1, no. 3, November 12, 1944. See also, W. F. Ogburn, "The American Family in World War II," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, September, 1943. pp. 20-29.

ticularly marked in 1942, the first full calendar year of our participation in the war. A large proportion of these young men married women older than themselves, a striking reversal of peacetime age combinations. A second change in age of marriage was the relative increase of marriages among persons 35 years of age and over. In New York State, from 1939 to 1942, the increase among women in that age span was 73 per cent; for men, 65 per cent.<sup>7</sup>

*War Increases the Proportion of Ill-Advised Marriages.*

Ill-advised marriages always occur. In every society, there are some persons who act irrationally or from unworthy motives, even in regard to the major events in their lives, the highly charged emotional atmosphere which war engenders increases both the number of such people and the scope of ill-advised behavior. After World War I, one heard a great deal about war marriages, and the term came to carry with it a sort of left-handed justification for whatever happened. These were marriages that had been consummated under the excitement and abnormal conditions of the war period and which in most cases would not have been made under normal circumstances.

Several recurring types of ill-advised marriages during the Second World War have been identified.<sup>8</sup> First were those in which cool calculation played its part, and which grew out of the direct and tangible advantages to be gained by marrying a serviceman. The wife of an enlisted man received \$50 a month, regardless. National Service Life Insurance, provided by the government, could be taken out to the amount of \$10,000. Without detracting from the legitimate purposes of such financial arrangements, the fact remains that marriage to a serviceman was a quick and direct way for women to supplement their incomes; that some women anticipated these advantages unduly is shown by the recurring appearance of those who married three, four, and more, obviously for purposes of revenue. Second were the cases in which marriage was a conventional cloak for sex satisfactions during periods of leave. The soldier had his leave. The future was uncertain. Did not life owe him something? And marriage was the covenant which the girl, her family, his background, and the mores demanded. Third was a much larger group of cases in which a wartime marriage satisfied some psychological need, the particular choice of mate being a second-

<sup>7</sup> *Metropolitan Life Insurance Statistical Bulletin*, May, 1944, pp. 5-7.

<sup>8</sup> Bossard, "Family Problems in Wartime," pp. 65-68.

ary consideration. The homesick soldier who needed solace, the frustrated private who had to regain his ego, the romantic girl who wanted to do something to help win the war are obvious illustrations of this type. Once the wave of such marriages got under way, its movement tended to generate its own fervor and force—and victims—among young men and women alike. This suggests a fourth type: the partly imitative, partly compulsive type of marriage. War marriages became the vogue. Everyone else was marrying, why not we? The pressure merely to marry, somewhat regardless of whom one married, became tremendous, especially early in the war. This pressure operated everywhere—at the induction center, in the platoon, on the ship, in the ground crew, in sororities, in the clique—the contagion of example was felt everywhere. Some of these marriages, sudden in conception and execution and popularly referred to as love-at-first-sight marriages, obviously were of a compulsive sort, a kind of psychological mechanism by which one forced himself to accept a mate as the best bargain possible under the circumstances.<sup>9</sup>

Marry-and-run marriages constitute another form of war phenomenon; like hit-and-run accidents, they often are rather tragic occurrences. By marry-and-run marriages are meant legal weddings which are not followed by continuing cohabitation. The couple marry. After a day or a week or two together, they separate, to resume the accustomed tenor of their respective ways. In wartime, the call of military duty usually terminates their life together. The essential danger in such marriages is that the couple do not have the customary opportunity to make the gradual unbroken transition from romantic bliss to prosaic adjustment that is the basis of continued domestic accord. Happiness in marriage, according to the experts, is an achievement, not a discovery. It is a by-product of successful experience in living together. Beginning their life together on the romantic level and with the help of the romantic aura, married couples learn to compromise as they cohabit. It is this normal process which is lacking in marry-and-run marriages. The romantic glow may fade or be dimmed during the separation, while each partner shares different life experiences. When, as, and if they unite later—and they do not always do so—there are shadows in their relationships which the glow of a honeymoon could have dissolved.

<sup>9</sup> Consult here James H. S. Bossard, "Marriage as a Status Achieving Device," *Sociology and Social Research*, September-October, 1944, pp. 1-10.

Finally there are war marriages between persons of widely differing cultural backgrounds. American servicemen went to the four corners of the world during the Second World War, and thousands of them found mates in new and strange cultural areas. The Tennessee farm boy married the big-city, friendly street girl; a Texas ranger found a wife among the German girls in Potsdam; the Michigan small-town boy came back with a Polish wife. Thousands of such marriages were consummated by lonely servicemen. By the end of July, 1946, more than 50,000 foreign brides had come to the United States.

Not all the above-mentioned marriages are destined to fail. The point of emphasis here is that a relatively large proportion of these war marriages took place between persons not sufficiently known to each other, of differing cultures, or from dissimilar social levels, or proceeded from motives that do not lend themselves to permanently satisfying attachments.

#### *War Has Direct and Measurable Effects upon the Birth Rate.*

Changes in the birth rate follow, at the required biological interval, changes in the marriage rate, but are modified by such other factors as the distribution of the armed forces, the length of the war, the degree of national security, and the nature of the national economy.<sup>10</sup> In the United States, these factors produced, since the onset of the Second World War, the following series of changes: First, a slight increase manifested itself during the second half of 1940. After the passage of the Selective Service Act in September, 1940, and the declaration of war in December, 1941, there were decided spurts. By 1943, the birth rate was 23.0 almost higher by a third than in 1933. Examining the monthly rates and correcting them for seasonal variations, we find that the rate began to decline in November, 1943, and continued to do so for some months. Following the end of the war and the postwar rise in the marriage rate, the birth rate reached a high of 23.3, with a total of 3,260,000 births. The rates by years from 1933 to 1946 are shown in Table 7.

It is pertinent to add that young mothers in the age group 20-29 years were chiefly responsible for the wartime rise in the birth rate, the continuation of a trend manifest since 1933; that women in the age

<sup>10</sup> For a summary of changes during the First World War, consult James H. S. Bossard, "War and the Family," *American Sociological Review*, June, 1941, pp. 340 ff.



groups 40 and over continued to show a downward trend, as was also the case in families with five or more children, and that the largest relative increase in births was in families in which the father was under 20 years of age. These facts concerning the parents' age and the size of family are important, first, as indications of family structures formed during the war period; second, as proof that the wartime rise

TABLE 7. Annual Birth Rates, U. S. Registration Area, 1933-1946

|      |    |      |      |    |      |
|------|----|------|------|----|------|
| 1933 | .  | 16.6 | 1940 |    | 17.9 |
| 1934 |    | 17.2 | 1941 |    | 18.9 |
| 1935 | .. | 16.9 | 1942 |    | 21.0 |
| 1936 | .. | 16.7 | 1943 | .. | 23.0 |
| 1937 | .  | 17.1 | 1944 | .. | 22.2 |
| 1938 | .  | 17.6 | 1945 |    | 21.6 |
| 1939 | .. | 17.3 | 1946 |    | 23.3 |

in the birth rate must not be interpreted to mean a reversal of the long-time trend toward the small-family system; and third, that, from the standpoint of the national population, the wartime surplus of births must be considered as the moving forward of births that would have occurred in ensuing years in the normal course of events.

### *War Separates Marital Mates Under Conditions Which War Engenders.*

The separation of marital mates is a consequence not only of the men being called to the colors for military service, but also in many cases of the large-scale redistribution of civilian populations which totalitarian war involves. Such enforced wartime separations are highly significant for family relations, and in a variety of ways.

One group of problems results from the premature separation of newly married couples before the essential marital relationships are fully established. Reference has already been made to these in a preceding section of this chapter. The consequences of such separations are obvious: first, disappointment, disillusion, frustration, futility, and even anger, during the separation; second, the difficulty of making satisfactory adjustment in the postwar reunion. Children were born to many such couples, who found themselves in the role of parents before they had adjusted to that of husband and wife.

Second is the separation of husband and wife in fully established families. This involves the breakup of a crystallized relationship and the creation for both of the problem of adjusting, for the time being, to

a non-family pattern of living. Experience during World War II revealed several well-defined aspects of this process. To begin with, a new relationship between husband and wife had to be established on the basis of their physical separation. In large part, this meant the substitution of a letter-by-letter for a face-to-face relationship. Since these two are quite different, the change in relationship seemed almost to involve different persons. Some people have a good letter personality. They verbalize readily and can project their feelings adequately, perhaps more so than in face-to-face relationships. Others have less, or no, facility in this respect. Inadequacy or silence in the only available medium of communication, even between mates whose past relationships have been satisfactory, may come to be interpreted to mean now less and now more than is really intended.

Again, since separation involves the interruption of regularized affectional relationships, including the sexual, how shall the affectional outgo be rerouted? Husband and wife meet this problem under widely differing circumstances. The husband is withdrawn from the ordinary group controls over his conduct—family, community, church. If he has entered the service, he joins an in-group of males who develop their own interests, needs, rationalizations, and mores. He gets around and makes new contacts. There is the appeal of the uniform. All of this happens against the overtones of war psychology. Meanwhile, for the wife, no in-group develops. For her there are these obvious possibilities: She may return to her parents, with the reestablishment of various former relationships. She may throw herself into war work and different forms of sublimating activity. If she has a child or children, there is the possible comfort of a more intensive motherhood. This may be manifest to an unwholesome degree, both for the child and to the prejudice of future relationships with the father. Again, affectional outlets may be found with other men, with or without sexual exchange and with or without subsequent feelings of guilt. There is ample evidence from the recent and previous wars that the separation of husband and wife under wartime conditions is fraught with many temptations, and that the longer the separation continues, the more the new substitute adjustments tend to crystallize.

Finally, historical treatments of wartime separations invariably emphasize the effects upon the personality types of those involved. As far as the male is concerned, it has been the experience of the past that great nations engaged in continuing warfare tend to produce a single

definitive type of man which reflects the qualities essential for military success. This type, a product of military discipline, finds its expression in the dominant male, emphatic in the authority of the father over his children, of the master over his workers, and of the husband over his wife. Historians have identified this type among the warlike nations of the past, just as more recent students have identified it among the Germans and the Japanese. The military male, once his type crystallizes, tends toward hardness and firmness of character. War, Lecky wrote years ago, "accustoms men to the abnegation needed for simultaneous action, compels them to repress their fears, and establish a firm control over their affections. Patriotism, too, leads them to subordinate their personal wishes to the interests of the society in which they live."<sup>11</sup> In times past, this type held no high regard for women. In many of the qualities which he prized, women were indisputably inferior, with the inevitable result that he placed them in a subject status.

Sufficient time has not elapsed to enable us to see this kind of effect of World War II in proper perspective, but there is some evidence pointing toward the emergence of the military type. The establishment of compulsory military training in peacetime, as well as the maintenance of large standing forces, may further stimulate these developments.

For the stay-at-home wife there is the immediate necessity for assuming greater responsibility and leadership. She must now "take over," as we say. Her first steps in this direction may falter but there is no other way. Moreover, the assumption of leadership and responsibility is a habit which feeds upon itself. What a prolonged war may mean in this respect

is shown in the considered effects of the Punic Wars. First, for the thirty or more years of actual warfare, a large proportion of able-bodied Romans saw service in the field. Husbands were away from home for years at a time. As a consequence, the management of estates and households devolved upon their wives, many women receiving a training in self-reliance and efficiency in responsible positions. This in turn led such women to submit with ill grace to the restrictions in their daily lives and interests that their husbands imposed upon them on their return from the wars. Before long, the *manus*, i.e., the power of the Roman husband over his wife, came to be indicted by these women as tyranny. After the second Punic War, the controversy was compromised, and the practice of marriage without *manus* grew up. It was this sad circumstance that led the elder Cato to remark:

<sup>11</sup> William G. H. Lecky, *History of European Morals*, D. Appleton Company, New York, 3rd edition, 1890, vol. 1, p. 182.

"All men rule over women, we Romans rule over all men, and our wives rule over us."<sup>12</sup>

A contemporary writer has this to say about the effects of the American Civil War upon the southern wife: "In 1860, the South became a matriarchy. The men went away from home to other battlefields, leaving the women free to manage farm and plantation without their bungling hindrance; whence they returned, those who had escaped heroic death found their surrogates in complete and competent charge and liking it. Four years had fixed the habit of command which, when I first began to know them, thirty had not broken."<sup>13</sup>

Perhaps most clearly revealed are the effects of the First World War in this respect. That war changed the employment of women "from a shameful business to heroism" overnight; it opened up new fields of employment, especially for women in the middle and upper classes; and in many other respects it put the finishing touches on the "emancipation of women." Complementary to the right to behave like a man came the right to misbehave as he does, thus bringing about a change in many of the mores.<sup>14</sup>

Reference has already been made to the increased employment of women during the Second World War, and there is every reason to think that this is merely the more measurable aspect of further far-reaching changes in their status, with particular reference to their conception of their own rights and responsibilities.

### *War Creates a Background of Anxiety for Many Family Relationships.*

Underlying many wartime problems of family life, particularly those of the children, is a group of factors that are psychological in character or in effect. That is to say, they take their importance from the mental symptoms which they produce. Of these symptoms, anxiety is particularly significant. Anxiety has been much emphasized in recent psychiatric literature, having come to be identified as the common problem of the neuroses, "the motor which sets the neurotic process going and keeps it in motion."<sup>15</sup>

The concept of anxiety developed by Horney is particularly suggestive for purposes of sociological analysis. The two factors invariably

<sup>12</sup> Bossard, James H. S., "The Family in Past Wars," pp. 6-7.

<sup>13</sup> John A. Rice, "My Father's Folks," *Harper's Magazine*, September, 1940, p. 426.

<sup>14</sup> Frederick Lewis Allen, *Only Yesterday*, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1932.

<sup>15</sup> Karen Horney, *The Neurotic Personality of Our Time*, W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., New York, 1937, p. 23.

present in the production of anxiety, she says, are a strong sense of overpowering danger and a feeling of defenselessness against it. The individual who suffers from anxiety, she points out, "has the feeling of a powerful, inescapable danger against which he himself is entirely helpless."<sup>16</sup> Again, "anxiety is a feeling of helplessness toward a potentially hostile world."<sup>17</sup> "The environment is dreaded as a whole because it is felt to be unreliable, mendacious, unappreciative, unfair, unjust, begrudging and merciless."<sup>18</sup> Such a concept makes anxiety basically the product of a particular form of culture or of a specific state of its being, such as war.<sup>19</sup>

It is obvious that there were many developments in our culture during the past war which were productive of feelings of marked anxiety, tension, fear, apprehension, and the like. There were the demands of the Selective Service, uncertain at best and confused and bungled by varying degrees of ineptness in many areas; uncertainties concerning the whereabouts, the physical condition, and the mental health of family members or relatives in the service; apprehension over the separation of families, for either military or employment purposes; feelings of insecurity concerning jobs and income, particularly, again, on the part of those connected with the war effort; worry over the darkening shadows of increasing income taxation and rising costs of living, especially in families with adolescents in school; concern over plans for the careers, school, and work of adolescents approaching the age of military service; uncertainty over the difficulties of securing such rational indispensables as fuel, meat, and the like. All of these and many others fit as perfectly as a tailored glove the psychiatrist's description of anxiety-producing conditions. Truly, wartime anxiety is a family problem of no mean proportions. Obviously, too, it is a background which breeds restlessness, defiance, emotional disturbance, and various other negative forms of behavior.

### *War Modifies or Mutilates the Family Structure.*

Reference was made in Chapter III to the family as a structure that constitutes the over-all framework within which its interactive and cultural processes operate. One of the costs of war results in many

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 60.

<sup>17</sup> Karen Horney, *New Ways in Psychoanalysis*, W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., New York, 1939, pp. 74-75.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 75.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Donald W. Mackinnon, "A Topological Analysis of Anxiety," *Character and Personality*, March, 1944.

modifications or mutilations of the family structure through the removal, temporarily or permanently, of members of the family group. Such removals, most frequent in the homes of adolescents in World War II, include fathers and older brothers and sisters.

To take away suddenly members of a group as intimate as the family is always a serious matter, especially for adolescents who are already in the throes of many stresses, strains, and readjustments. There has been some appreciation of this in the case of a parent's death or the breakup of the home through divorce, for example. In terms of sociological process, the removal of any member of a family is a major psychosocial operation, most like an amputation. It changes the number of members, and hence the number and variety of intra-family relationships. It eliminates the face-to-face relations of each member with the member who is gone. It changes the age and sex composition of the family. In the small immediate family so characteristic of today, the absence of one person may be profoundly important in this respect. The removal of a father or an older brother may eliminate all the male members.

Furthermore, the absence of a parent cuts in half the biparental social heritage which has always been emphasized as the peculiar strength of the monogamous family. If the father goes, this may mean the departure of the chief disciplinarian or chief counselor, or both. The removal of an older brother may take away the chief confidant and trail blazer; a sister's absence may mean the loss of a buddy-at-arms. In today's small-family system, the departure of an older brother or sister may mean the elimination of the entire sibling relationship.

One aspect of the withdrawal of ten or more million men from family life which is particularly significant for adolescents is that it increases, for the time being at least, the feminization of child rearing which careful students noted even before the war, and which some viewed with considerable misgiving.<sup>20</sup> Under the prevailing organization of the workaday world, most fathers are away from home a large part of the day, with the result that the mothers "take over"—at least during their absence. Our system of public education below the high-school level is staffed almost exclusively by women teachers. Most Sunday-school teachers are women. All of these and other aspects of the feminization of child rearing are aggravated by war, for throughout history war has

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Roy Helton, "The Inner Threat: Our Own Softness," *Harper's Magazine*, September, 1940, pp. 337-343, Margaret Mead, *And Keep Your Powder Dry*, William Morrow & Company, Inc., New York, 1943.

meant the turning over of many of the normal functions of civilian life to women.<sup>21</sup>

*War Tends to Intensify the Strains and Stresses in Parent-Child Relationships.*

The intensification of strain in parent-child relations is particularly true for the adolescent stage, and in a variety of ways. First, war arouses intense emotional stimuli in certain areas of life, and soon these come to be extended to other areas. One result is that activity is fostered. People feel the urge to do things—adolescents as well as parents. For adults, all kinds of socially approved avenues exist for channelizing this stirring urge. Not so for adolescents. "Millions of youth, feeling the restlessness, excitement and anxiety that war brings, lack both effective means of sharing in adult concerns and opportunities for wholesome fun and companionship."<sup>22</sup> Youth, thrilling to the inevitable expectancy of the adolescent years, responds to the excitement of war, resents being asked to wait; parents resist their children's assumption of new and unapproved patterns of response and talk about delinquent trends.

Second, war gives adolescents increased opportunities to develop self-reliance and independence. Such are the wartime demands for labor that almost any young person near the legal age may secure a position. These young people are at work in stores, on farms, in filling stations, in drugstores, and at defense plants, doing odd jobs, earning their own wages, taking the place of adults. One feature of their recent employment calls for special comment. Many adolescents compared the wartime wages they received with the wages earned by their parents several years ago during the depression. Young persons are neither economists nor philosophers; they simply made a comparison, and it was not to their own disadvantage. One may applaud or regret this premature independence as he will, but its reality and the relation of that reality to parent-child conflicts cannot be ignored. "The old man can't say nothin' ta me about comin' in late, I helps ta pay the rent."

Again, one senses today a somewhat pronounced even if indefinite tension between generations in regard to the identification of their respective age stereotypes. Each accuses the other of not acting its age. Much of this seems to spring from the widespread effort of middle-

<sup>21</sup> Bossard, "The Family in Past Wars," pp. 1-10.

<sup>22</sup> "Report, Children's Bureau Commission, on Children in Wartime," *The Child*, April, 1944, p. 147.

aged persons, with the aid of physicians, vitamins, and beauticians, to retain the looks, the vigor, and the ways of youth. This seems to be particularly true of the adults who felt frustrated during the depression and who, with the help of wartime incomes, tried to recover this lost chapter of life. Somehow or other, many of these parents seem envious of youth and resent the growing up of their own children, for grown children are such undeniable evidence of what they seek to hide. Adolescents, on the other hand, resent this effort on the part of the middle-aged. Overtly, they see older people acting kittenishly or childishly; vaguely they resent the loss of the comforting parental stereotype. The modern mother, with her vivid slacks and streamlined hairdo, may look like an attractive companion for her daughter, but the girl may sense the lack of a historic and traditional pattern. Pertinent here is Abby's plaintive cry to her mother: "You don't knit, you never make cookies, and you haven't any bosom."<sup>23</sup>

Another group of parent-adolescent conflicts, peculiarly important in the United States at the moment, results from the national origin of selected population elements. There are in the United States a large number of adolescents whose parents are of German, Italian, or Japanese origin. Some of these parents were born in the respective countries; others, born here, have retained the language and mannerisms of their country of origin. Their children, on the other hand, are American-born, American-schooled, and American-indoctrinated. In every respect they identify themselves with the United States, and to the extent and with the fervor that they so do, they tend to resent their parents, or at least the stain of their enemy-alien origin. Family situations of this kind create not only conflict but also many other problems, often very painful and prolonged.

Finally, war creates parent-adolescent conflicts because of its acceleration of cultural change. Some part of the conflict between generations is the inevitable result of the time span between them and the changes which occur during a war period. The young tend to accept the new; the middle-aged and the old incline toward the *status quo*. When the rate of cultural change is slow, the resultant cultural differences that develop between generations are relatively few and small; as the rate of change rises, the differences grow apace. War is important in this connection because it precipitates and stimulates cultural changes on a

<sup>23</sup> Margaret Buell Wilden, "Abby, Her Farm," *Atlantic Monthly*, February, 1940, p. 239.



broad scale. Sociologically speaking, war is a complex of social changes involving the entire societal pattern; one phase of it breaks the cultural continuities between generations, with an inevitable increase of conflicts between them.

*Family Disorganization Increases During the Postwar Years.*

If separation is the basic fact in wartime family changes, family reunion is the fundamental problem of the postwar period. This means the task of reestablishing the peculiarly intimate relationship that is the essence of family life. There are several distinct aspects of this problem. First are the reunion problems of couples whose wartime separation was a therapeutic experiment or a welcome marital holiday. War, like a career in public life, offers many a family an honorable and socially acceptable way out of an unhappy domestic situation. Through the centuries, this solution has been used extensively in wartime. Especially has this been true in the case of *marriages de convenance*, and when neither divorce nor desertion was feasible. Today, in spite of the possibility of other arrangements, war offers many couples an opportunity for an experimental solution, the temporizing solution of delay, the mathematical chance of the more tragic end, or the honorable rationalization for the *coup de grâce*. For these couples, for whom war brought no solution, peace demands its own decisions.

The second aspect is the reunion with the wartime choice of mate. The girl from the upper-class finishing school who married a uniform worn by a boy from the other side of the railroad tracks now sees the boy rather than the uniform. The lonely farm boy who married the big-city canteen worker takes her, after the war, to his pappy and mammy in the foothills of Tennessee. The girl who looked so good on the dance floor does not fit into her husband's family's modest bungalow. The giddy youngsters who thought it exciting to celebrate "that week end" by getting married must now face the responsibilities of a supposedly lifelong union. For many such couples, the postwar period comes like the morning after the night before.

Third, there are the reunions between mates who have changed. As already pointed out, mates are not filed in secluded portfolios when war separates them. They go on living in their respective worlds, and these worlds may be very different from each other. Millions of American men, many of them husbands, went to the ends of the world during the recent war, and underwent experiences ranging from the most

crucial that human beings can face to the merely interesting and instructive. Meanwhile their wives stayed at home, worked, played, worried, suffered, celebrated, or served their country in varying degrees and capacities. When these husbands and wives are reunited after the war, both have their respective pasts behind them. They may have grown apart. There may be merely shyness to overcome. There may be a hangover of pleasant but worrying memories. Many a married soldier (and conceivably his wife) who, in the excitement of the war period, took a commandment or two lightly, returns to the domestic fireside with a sense of shame or remorse. Internal struggles, which the psychiatrists call mental conflict, may result, and they often are deep-seated and unconscious.

Relatively little has been said about the reunion problems of the serviceman with his family, other than his wife. There is, for example, the teen-age lad who went away a schoolboy, dominated by his father or pampered by a solicitous mother, whom the neighbors spoke of as "that kid next door." He may be one of the 600,000 discharged from the Army alone for neuropsychiatric reasons or their equivalent, and he may return to the kind of home situation which was originally responsible for his condition.<sup>24</sup> He may return a veteran, perhaps an officer, possibly the holder of a medal. He has come of age, he has matured, he has been places and seen things—"Something new has been added." The old relationships obviously cannot be resumed, but in the beginning only he may be aware of it.

There is the reunion of the returning father with his children. He may not have seen these children before, and they may have been cared for by in-laws whose names he knows only vaguely, if at all. He may find ready acceptance or be denied it. A "closed corporation" may have been formed between a child and his lonely mother. The child may have been undisciplined in the father's absence. The father, glorified in uniform and *in absentia*, returns in the civilian flesh to be a firm disciplinarian. The mother may clash with him over his assumption of the role of head of the house.

Attempts to measure the family disorganization which results from failure to meet these reunion problems in socially acceptable ways take a number of forms. Perhaps the most popular is to consider the records in the daily press. To be sure, these are the exceptional, the

<sup>24</sup> Edward A. Strecker, *Their Mothers' Sons*, J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia, 1946.

startling, the dramatic, often the seamy aspects of family disorganization; but what boils over the sides of the kettle is made up of the same ingredients as are still within. The boiling-over is simply a matter of temperature. The William T. Carter Foundation of the University of Pennsylvania has made a summary analysis of news clippings on family postwar problems, with special reference to war veterans. A summary of a ten-month coverage of news in the *Philadelphia Bulletin*, the largest evening newspaper in America, and the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, the third largest morning newspaper, has been prepared by Mrs. Eleanor Boll, of the staff of the Foundation, and has been published elsewhere.<sup>25</sup> The outstanding problems revealed include: (1) Enoch Arden marriages, resulting because women, on notification by the military authorities of the death of their husband, had assumed they were free to remarry, and had done so; (2) bigamous marriages facilitated by wartime circumstances; (3) extramarital relationships, with or without children, which were subsequently discovered by the other mate; (4) mates bored with each other because of changes undergone by one or both during the war period; (5) difficulties with in-laws; (6) poor stewardship of wartime earnings and savings, in some cases involving a criminal diversion of funds, and (7) disillusionment in international marriages, expressing itself in various ways ranging from complete neglect to murder.

To the statistical-minded student, variations in the divorce rate are of prime importance as an index of family disorganization. Utilizing the data at his disposal, Hall showed that there was a rather marked increase in the divorce rate in the United States after the First World War because of the instability of marriages contracted during the years 1917-1920.<sup>26</sup> Table 8, presenting the rates for selected years to the end of 1945, indicates a marked increase in the rate throughout the entire period of World War II. Preliminary data for the period since 1945 indicate even more phenomenal increases.

The careful student of family disorganization must avoid, however, a too exclusive reliance upon divorce data as a measure of family difficulties. To begin with, there is a substantial numerical element in the population whose religious affiliations, personal convictions, or community pressure make divorce an unacceptable way out of family

<sup>25</sup> Becker and Hill, *op. cit.*

<sup>26</sup> Calvin Hall, "The Instability of Postwar Marriages," *Journal of Social Psychology*, November, 1934, pp. 523-530.

difficulties. Second, for another large proportion of the population the financial cost of a divorce is or is considered to be prohibitive. Third, there is the relative difficulty and time involved in securing a divorce. Fourth, the social values of many people do not require anything so formal as a divorce to dissolve an unsatisfactory marriage. A couple agrees, or one member so determines, to go its respective romantic way, regardless of earlier legal commitments. Living together by persons previously married and not divorced from their earlier mates

TABLE 8 Divorce Rates, Selected Years, 1925-1945<sup>27</sup>

| YEAR | NUMBER OF<br>DIVORCES | RATE PER<br>1000 POPULATION | RATE PER<br>100 MARRIAGES |
|------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1925 | 175,449               | 1.5                         | 14.7                      |
| 1930 | 191,591               | 1.6                         | 17.0                      |
| 1935 | 218,000               | 1.7                         | 16.4                      |
| 1939 | 251,000               | 1.9                         | 17.8                      |
| 1940 | 264,000               | 2.0                         | 16.5                      |
| 1941 | 293,000               | 2.2                         | 17.2                      |
| 1942 | 321,000               | 2.4                         | 18.1                      |
| 1943 | 359,000               | 2.6                         | 22.7                      |
| 1944 | 400,000               | 2.9                         | 27.5                      |
| 1945 | 502,000               | 3.6                         | 31.0                      |

is quite common, especially among the lower classes, in our urban centers. Finally, the rate of legal dissolution of marriage is only one of several indices of marital difficulties, as all the recent literature on family tensions so clearly reveals.

*The Increase in Family Disorganization Is Likely to Involve an Increase of Social Responsibility for Child Care.*

This statement is based upon three groups of facts. The first is historical. A careful reading of the history of child care in this country shows that, during the periods following two of our major wars, the Revolutionary and the Civil, there was considerable development in the social care of dependent and neglected children. In 1784, after the Revolutionary War, New York, for example, removed the control of pauper children from the church authorities and gave it to the over-

<sup>27</sup> Compiled from data contained in "Marriage and Divorce in the United States, 1937-1945," *Vital Statistics*, Special Reports, National Office of Vital Statistics, Federal Security Agency, Washington, September 10, 1946.

seers of the poor. A number of the larger cities enlarged or changed the location of their almshouse during this period, the almshouse being customarily used for the institutional care of dependent children. Particularly in the decade after the Civil War, there was a great deal of activity in the field of public care of children. In 1866, Massachusetts established a state primary school for the care of "unsettled" poor children, and passed a law providing that children under sixteen years of age who by reason of the neglect, crime, drunkenness, or other vices of parents were growing up without salutary parental control, might be committed by the court to the proper designated place. In 1866, Ohio authorized the establishment of the county children's homes system. In 1867, New York created its State Board of Charities, which on its first examination found a total of 2231 children in almshouses. In 1869, Michigan appointed a commission to make "exhaustive inquiry into the condition of children in county poorhouses," and in 1874 established its well-known state school system. In various other states, conditions which developed during this decade in the public care of children led to reforms in subsequent years.<sup>28</sup>

Two other groups of facts lend support to the judgment that the post-war period is showing a larger proportion of children in need of public care. One is the marked increase in family disorganization and disintegration; this was generally anticipated and is under way, and inevitably leads to problems of child care. The other group of factors inhere in the changing roles of the immediate and the more extended or kinship group. Davis has pointed out the significance of these changes for children of divorced parents, and has shown how in other cultures the wider use of the kinship group solves problems which the greater reliance upon the immediate family intensifies in our own.<sup>29</sup> With our characteristic reliance upon the immediate family, the typical young child in America today views the world from a very narrow ledge, so to speak; and when that ledge of security wobbles or disintegrates, there is so often "no family" or other support save except the agency arms of the larger society.

<sup>28</sup> The reader will find an excellent summary of the history of these and other changes in Homer Folks, *The Care of Destitute, Neglected and Delinquent Children*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1902.

<sup>29</sup> Kingsley Davis in "Children of Divorced Parents, Sociological and Statistical Analysis," *Law and Contemporary Problems*, Summer, 1944, pp. 700-710.

## WAR AND SELECTED EFFECTS UPON CHILDREN

Total war is so pervasive and children are so susceptible to influences of all kinds that any attempt to assess its meaning for child development becomes at once a most ambitious project. This section of the present chapter is content with analyzing some of the more tangible effects of war upon child life. It was written originally in the midst of the war, and, in order that its wartime "feel" may be retained, only minor changes have been made. Specifically, it deals with (1) changes in schools, (2) the effect of wartime excitement on children's nervous systems, (3) the wartime conditioning of attitudes, (4) children in industry and agriculture, (5) children of working mothers, (6) child placement, (7) juvenile delinquency, and (8) illegitimate children.

*Changes in Schools.*

Two kinds of changes in our schools have been noticeable during World War II: changes in curriculums and content of school life, and those entailing the physical difficulties of school administration.

A change of the first kind is the increased interest in "realistic education." Students want training that is immediately applicable to the war effort, and choose to concentrate upon nursing, typing, shorthand, aeronautics, radio, mechanical drawing, the pure sciences. Though they are still taught the liberal arts, children work hardest at whatever attracts their present interest. This change is making school real to thousands of children who were simply passing the time there until they could escape, and is fitting them early for better jobs than they would have been able to fill otherwise. For others, it is providing a superficial technical training which will serve them only as long as the emergency lasts. To a great many other able children, the change in interest is doing irreparable damage by limiting the range of their potential usefulness. The children now in school will have to carry through our present aims of international unity. The realization of those aims depends upon a deep understanding of broad social concepts and values, that is, upon the content of the liberal education that seems useless to children during wartime.

A change of a related nature is the curtailing of time for formal education. During the war winters, many schools had to close for a while because the buildings were unheated. Many students were

allowed to leave school early in the spring in order to help with agriculture. Time was taken from regular studies for the collection of scrap, for War Bond drives, and for registration for rationing. Study hours were given over to programs of instruction on war topics. Some of these distractions from formal education are important. There has long been a need to tie in the schools more closely with community life. But Army and Navy officials have complained that there is an alarmingly large number of young men in our country who cannot perform needed services because of their scanty formal education.

The second kind of change in our schools is exemplified by the teacher shortage. At the end of 1942 we were facing an estimated shortage of from fifty to sixty thousand teachers.<sup>30</sup> Educators have for years decried "mass production" in education, and Caroline Zachry stated as an immediate need a reduction in the size of classes so that children might have individual attention while the war was increasing their problems and decreasing their satisfactions at home.<sup>31</sup> Instead, just to fill the vacancies, it was necessary to call upon newly trained teachers, married women, and the retired teachers who had already been ruled out as not being the best ones for children.

Another new problem is the difficulty of getting to school. The annual essential replacement of about 12,000 of the 93,000 school buses in our country was stopped.<sup>32</sup> Some youngsters cannot walk the distance to their schools and have no other means of transportation. Others battle with the traffic congestion and arrive at school tired, excited, and often late.

Finally, because of the migration of families pursuing war work, some schools had to close for lack of pupils, and others had to jam youngsters together in classrooms too small for them. Noise, lack of discipline, distraction, and tension characterize the tone of an overcrowded school. A group of parents whose children took jobs in defense areas contended that it was better for them to work than to go to school under such conditions.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>30</sup> "Additional Data on Teacher Shortages, and Remedial Proposals," *School and Society*, July 18, 1942, p. 60.

<sup>31</sup> Caroline B. Zachry, "A Challenge from Restless Youth," *New York Times Magazine*, May 2, 1942, p. 37, column 2.

<sup>32</sup> Marshall Field, "Child and Manpower," *Survey Monthly*, December, 1942, pp. 323-326.

<sup>33</sup> Myron Falk, "Child Labor in Southern Defense Areas," *Social Service Review*, September, 1942, p. 436.

*Wartime Excitement and Children's Nerves.*

The consensus of child psychologists is that war is not a cause of neuroses in children. Stable children take it in their stride when properly guided. From the Child Study Association comes the answer to a mother's question about a five-year-old girl who is terrified over the war. This mother was told, "Her present state may be *intensified* by knowledge of real dangers . . . but it is not *caused* by these things."<sup>84</sup> If she were given greater security at home, her terror would decrease. To a great many mothers this theory, though psychologically sound, smacks of quibbling. They *cannot* give their children greater security at home, and they cannot *because* of the war.

First, war has changed adults and affected their own nerves. James Plant expects that children will copy them. Though social crises may have little meaning to children, adult attitudes are extremely contagious.<sup>85</sup> This influence was immediately apparent on our entrance into the war. Ralph Preston found that, before Pearl Harbor children were personally unaffected by the war;<sup>86</sup> but on December 8, 1941, when the children arrived at school they were very much affected personally. They had been subject, during the previous day, to displays of adult emotion such as they had rarely experienced. A major adult crisis left them confused and frightened. In San Francisco, "Nursery school teachers reported greater excitement, physical aggressiveness and noisiness. . . . In the schools there was general excitement in all classes."<sup>87</sup> Teachers in Pennsylvania found the younger children excitable, hyperactive, and unusually dependent upon them. An hour had to be devoted to allaying the fears of the older students.<sup>88</sup> Later, the children began to feel the effects of more specific adult tensions. Homes were upset. In one, Father wanted to enlist, or feared being drafted. In another, Big Brother went off to war. Father's job vanished overnight, or Mother rushed into a war job and was always tired and

<sup>84</sup> *Children in Wartime: Parents' Questions*, New York, Child Study Association of America, 1942, p. 13.

<sup>85</sup> James S. Plant, "Emotional Strains in Time of Crisis," in Sidonie Matsner Gruenberg (ed.), *The Family in a World at War*, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1942, p. 145.

<sup>86</sup> Ralph C. Preston, *Children's Reactions to a Contemporary War Situation*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1942, p. 59.

<sup>87</sup> Joseph C. Solomon, "Reactions of Children to Black-Outs," *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, April, 1942, p. 361.

<sup>88</sup> Staff of the Oak Lane Country Day School, "The First Week in a Pennsylvania School," *Progressive Education*, January, 1942, pp. 53-59.



irritable. In some instances, the whole family moved to a strange community where Mother was dissatisfied with everything. In others, money flowed into the home, intoxicating the members. Parents acted strangely, and home life was different. Niles Carpenter warns of the repercussions on children of the worsening temper of adults, of increased drunkenness, of bitterness and hysteria in public discussions.<sup>39</sup> Though the war itself may not make neurotics of children, the increased tension of adults heightens the children's former anxieties to neuroses, or their calm tempers to a state of restlessness and excitability.

Second, children are stimulated by the furor of the outside world, some of it aimed directly at them. In one midweek edition of an evening newspaper, sixty motion-picture theaters advertised war films. Six comic strips dealt with the war and spy rings. Eight cartoons derived their humor from war. The radio timetable offered a nearly continuous succession of war thrillers for children between 5 and 8:30 P.M. The headlines shouted of bombardments, commando raids, outbreaks of civilian violence, airplane crashes, strikes, and war casualties. This is a fair picture of the sources from which children of school age get their ideas of what is going on in the world, around which they model the tempo of their play life. A junior high-school teacher complains that her whole school seems to be stirred up by this kind of excitement. She describes it as a constant "day-before-Christmas-vacation fever," with the children becoming increasingly noisy and unruly, unable to concentrate, unable to sit still through a forty-minute period. Mental hygienists tell parents to prevent this by allowing just enough of such stimulation to satisfy the children but always to restrict it before it overexcites them. Actually, it is difficult to limit their participation in the great spectacle that the whole world was offering them. And many children seem insatiable. In their own insecurity, they turn for escape to this fare which cannot but increase their nervous tension.

### *Conditioning of Attitudes Toward War.*

What are the attitudes of children born of a peace-preaching generation when their country is attacked; of children who have been told that the killer is a social misfit, when they see their fathers dedicated to killing? Their attitudes are exceedingly varied—a healthy sign in a democracy during total war, for many parents, teachers, and com-

<sup>39</sup> Niles Carpenter, "Children: Social Priority Number One," *Survey Monthly*, December, 1941, p. 350.

munities can see the dangers of conditioning children to hatred and the glory of battle, and are still permitted to guide attitudes constructively.

In Los Angeles, on the day after Pearl Harbor, violence toward the Japanese broke out in some schools. But in one, whose principal anticipated such trouble by reading the Bill of Rights and describing the Japanese in terms of the student who had won the American Legion award, there was no act of hostility.<sup>40</sup> In New Jersey, school teachers were advised that permanent peace requires that children shall not be taught to hate. Rather, they should be led to see that common people are all caught by forces which they cannot yet control.<sup>41</sup> Nevertheless, in wartime, principles of mass psychology operate and produce increased suggestibility.<sup>42</sup> Surrender to the attitudes of the crowd, which hates the enemy, lauds the killer, follows the strongest leader, and consecrates itself to the goal of destruction, becomes harder to resist.

Adolescents have been most seriously affected by a conflict of attitudes.<sup>43</sup> They not only have learned their lessons of socialization, but have arrived at the moment of a desire for independence and idealism in attitudes. Disillusion sets in readily on the discovery that the old gods have clay feet. A high-school girl exclaimed, "There is no such thing as pleasantness any more—just sheer, simple pleasantness."<sup>44</sup> Many adolescents thus affected stop fighting for their ideals, feeling that the odds are against them. They are raising the delinquency figures by falling into the antisocial attitudes of an earlier era in their development, and by defying their rationalizing elders to give them new ideals. Others, entering adolescence with more stability, have reoriented their attitudes. One school girl who had adjusted to a middle course between the necessity of the moment and the hope of the future said, when the Japanese cherry trees were under discussion, "I wish the people would remember that we are not fighting the Japanese people nor Japanese

<sup>40</sup> Elizabeth Woods, "The First Day in Los Angeles," *Progressive Education*, January, 1942, p. 52.

<sup>41</sup> *School Children and the War*, Fellowship of Reconciliation, New York, 1942 (bulletin prepared by the New Jersey State Department of Public Instruction for distribution to elementary-school teachers).

<sup>42</sup> Ralph S. Banay, "Emotional Factors in Wartime Delinquency," *Probation*, April, 1943, p. 107.

<sup>43</sup> See Caroline Zachry, "The Adolescent and His Problems Today," in Gruenberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 219-229; and "The Impact of War on Children and Youth," *The Child*, March, 1943, pp. 135-137.

<sup>44</sup> Helene Gordon Lazareff, "High School Graduate: Woman of Tomorrow," *New York Times Magazine*, June 20, 1943, p. 18, column 2.

beauty. We are fighting against their form of government and the principles for which they stand."<sup>45</sup> Other girls who were not helped to draw fine lines between peoples and governments adopted all the new wartime philosophies, yet were building up constructive attitudes toward work by identifying themselves with the war effort. At least, the war has given adolescents a position of responsibility they have wanted and needed. A social worker reports that junior and senior high-school girls were eager to sew for the Red Cross and to take on household responsibilities, to learn cooking and child care, so that they would be ready for such service if needed. But the boys over 16 were restless; they did not know what would happen to them, and they wanted their fun while they could have it.<sup>46</sup>

Most of the younger boys, their attitudes easily regimented, openly glorified in the war. They collected scrap with a mania. They hated easily and fought easily. All their personal hostilities were expressed in terms of tearing Japs to pieces and cutting off Hitler's head. They are better off, says Dorothy Baruch, for getting the hate out of their systems.<sup>47</sup> But Anna Wolf warns that the danger to these young people lies not in their expressed attitudes, but in the lack of adult examples of civilized behavior which, in the past, has gradually socialized a thousand little potential Hitlers into constructive citizens.<sup>48</sup> Hate attitudes in children, allowed to develop unchecked when expressed through channels which adults happen to approve for the moment, can turn, unbidden, to any other channel that happens to arouse the hostility of the children when they grow older; and a prolonged regimentation of their attitudes will make them easy game for exploitation.

### *Children in Industry and Agriculture.*

War effects a change in the public attitude toward child labor. The real need for the help of children in industrial and agricultural expansion is exaggerated by the interest groups that are always eager

<sup>45</sup> Maud Frothingham Roby, "Implications of the Present World Situation for the Elementary School," *Elementary School Journal*, January, 1943, pp. 267-272.

<sup>46</sup> *Proceedings of the National Conference of Social Work*, May 10-16, 1942, Columbia University Press, New York, 1942, pp. 368-369.

<sup>47</sup> Dorothy Baruch, *You, Your Children, and War*, D. Appleton-Century Company, Inc., New York, 1942, p. 56.

<sup>48</sup> Anna W. M. Wolf, "War Begins in the Nursery," *Child Study*, Winter, 1942-1943, pp. 35-38.

for the employment of cheap youthful labor, and is represented by them as a call on the patriotism of youngsters and their parents.<sup>49</sup> The rising cost of living makes job-finding further desirable, and children, excited by the prospect of wages, rush into work with little restraint from their parents. One girl declared, "I'm going to try to make all the money I can as long as I can. When the boys come back we will have to quit. So we might just as well grab our chance right away."<sup>50</sup>

A "probably conservative" estimate of the number of children fourteen to seventeen working in industry and agriculture in 1943 is 2,780,000.<sup>51</sup> The 1940 census counted not quite a million. Thus for every child that worked before the war, at least three were working during the war. A direct result of greater numbers of child workers and the modification of public sentiment toward them is an increase in the illegal employment of minors. Gertrude Zimand describes some practices that were in use. Boys eleven, twelve, and thirteen worked in bowling alleys until one in the morning. A girl fourteen was working from 8 P.M. to 1 A.M. and from 4 A.M. to 7 A.M. in a place forbidden to children under sixteen.<sup>52</sup> A thirteen-year-old girl worked in a drive-in restaurant from 6 P.M. to 3 A.M. Twelve-year-old boys helped to load bakery trucks six nights a week from 7:30 to 11:30.<sup>53</sup>

In the bustling defense areas the young people were not wanted for actual war jobs. They worked in bowling alleys, poolrooms, theaters, stores, barbershops, beauty parlors, lunchrooms and soda fountains, and laundries and dry-cleaning establishments.<sup>54</sup> The number-one job for girls was as waitress and carhop in honky-tonks. They evaded state laws by having no salary. They simply exchanged services to customers for tips, and were free to come and go when they pleased.<sup>55</sup>

Agriculture appeals for children, and the government proposes definite programs for the recruiting, training, and placing of high-school students. Under such programs there is a maximum of planning and supervision. The problems encountered will be those unavoidably entailed in migration, in the placement of minors, and in the early inde-

<sup>49</sup> Falk, *op. cit.*, p. 436.

<sup>50</sup> Lazareff, *op. cit.*

<sup>51</sup> Gertrude Folks Zimand, *Child Manpower--1943*, National Child Labor Committee, New York, 1943, p. 9.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>53</sup> Gertrude Folks Zimand, *Child Workers in Wartime*, National Child Labor Committee, New York, 1942, p. 8.

<sup>54</sup> Zimand, *Child Manpower*, pp. 12-13.

<sup>55</sup> Falk, *op. cit.*, p. 437.

pendence of youngsters with an income. But there are thousands of children who are leaving home on their own, or being hired out by their parents to work on huge industrialized farms. These will face the real problems of exploitation.

Depending largely upon the parents and homes the children happen to have, the results of wartime child labor will be beneficial or exceedingly harmful. A healthy, happy boy whose parents agreed to let him work on a farm under close supervision during vacation, or who chose to shine the shoes of servicemen before going home to a good dinner, a jolly family, and a quiet evening, probably gained, in work experience, a sense of responsibility and a feeling of his individual worth in the war effort. But working children have always been drawn largely from substandard homes. Lack of adequate protection characterizes these children's work situations. They come to work physically unfit and they work too long, too hard, and under unwholesome conditions. These are the children who will pay for wartime demands upon their energy. "The child worker begins his industrial career at a very critical period in his development. . . . This is the period of maturing, of adolescence, when noticeable increase in the rate of growth and marked physical, physiological and emotional changes take place. This is a period when special nurture is still needed to assure the realization of the individual's potentialities."<sup>56</sup> Their health will suffer, their future growth will be affected, and their fatigue will increase the number of accidents, which is always high among the immature and inexperienced. An eleven-year-old girl suffered a heart attack from doing a man's work in the fields; a sixteen-year-old boy lost an arm which was caught in a centrifugal drier; a boy, fifteen, died from burns while cleaning a vat for a food company.<sup>57</sup>

Finally, the wide infractions of school attendance by these child workers has left them totally unprepared for the future in which their specific wartime service will be no longer required. They will be the first to become dependent when the labor force shrinks.

### *Working Mothers and Their Children.*

During wartime, young children have special need for a normal home life to counteract increased tensions. At the same time, industry requires

<sup>56</sup> "Child Health in Relation to Employment," *Social Service Review*, June, 1942, p. 319.

<sup>57</sup> Ziman, *Child Manpower*, p. 6.

millions of women to support its augmented program. A solution to the dilemma was the War Manpower Commission's suggestion that mothers of young children should not seek employment until the women who had no dependents under sixteen had been drawn into industry.<sup>58</sup> Actually, little can be done to coerce the one class of women or to discriminate against the other in the matter of employment. Women make their individual decisions on the basis of their immediate life situations.

Fathers have moved their families into boom towns, expecting a high salary. But many of them are unskilled. The job pays less and the living costs are more than they thought. The mother then applies for work, and the employer does not ask her questions about dependent children. Nor can women be blamed for working if their husbands are in the Army, or if they have been living a marginal existence for years or have been unwillingly submitting to relief. Some women at a comfortable income level feel that the opportunities offered by an increased income will more than offset their children's temporary inconvenience. A few have found that what they have left over to give their children after work is not enough, and have given up working. But for the most part, in this tug of war between children and jobs the children are losing.

Many of these youngsters go to day nurseries. Some parents regard these nurseries as an end to their problem. But Marshall Field points out: "They forget what it may mean to take little children from their beds in the early morning and hurry them off. They forget that there are many children who have a dangerous feeling of insecurity when they are away from their mothers from dawn to dark. They forget that there are many days when children show some indication of being ill and should be kept at home. They forget what is likely to happen to school-age children cut loose from parental supervision."<sup>59</sup>

In even worse danger are the children whose parents consider them able to shift for themselves. Three small children were locked in their home during the day. In their play, they turned on a gas jet. When found, one was dead and the other two were unconscious.<sup>60</sup> "A twelve-

<sup>58</sup> Katharine F. Lenroot, "Needed: Daytime Mothers," *New York Times Magazine*, December 13, 1942, p. 18, column 4.

<sup>59</sup> Field, *op. cit.*, p. 323.

<sup>60</sup> Howard W. Hopkirk, "Children Bear the Promise of a Better World," *Child Welfare League of America Bulletin*, December, 1941, p. 10.

year-old child is locked out of the house all day while her parents are at work. A woman on the graveyard shift drives her car close to the windows of the place where she is employed, and her four children sleep in the automobile. . . . In a southern California trailer camp nine children and four dogs were found chained to trailers while their parents worked all day in factories."<sup>61</sup> But no small child is capable of getting along without a real or a surrogate parent. Without such, he is in constant physical danger, emotionally starved, and deprived of experienced advice in choosing the direction of his life course. Such is the confusion of values during wartime that it will be a wonder if many of these children select a socially satisfactory route when they must depend on their own inexperience.

### *Child Placement.*

In contrast to the mothers who leave their children unattended are the ones who try to find proper placement for them. Their numbers have created a problem for child-placing agencies. The kinds of service they need have been an equal challenge. There is the mother who finds that the friend or relative who cared for her child has now obtained work. The day nurseries are filled. This mother asks for direct foster-home placement. On a high socioeconomic level is the mother who has always worked and has hired help for her children. Now help is unobtainable. In another class are the parents who have been maintaining a home they have wanted to escape. War is the time to break it up in the name of patriotism. They want their children placed for adoption.

The number of homes offered for placement is reduced in wartime. Foster parents are faced with the opportunity of renting their rooms at high prices to defense workers. They themselves feel the urge to more glamorous positions. One foster mother described her chagrin at watching the neighboring ladies gathering for Red Cross, with their bags and badges, whereas her only badge was a safety pin.<sup>62</sup> The housing shortage caused some families to move to cheaper and smaller quarters where they could not take children. Foster homes for children on a high socioeconomic level are particularly hard to find, for foster parents are

<sup>61</sup> "Eight-Hour Orphans," *Saturday Evening Post*, October 10, 1942, pp. 20-21.

<sup>62</sup> Elisabeth Lennox, "Board Staff and Foster Parents Consider Some Problems in Home-finding," *Child Welfare League Bulletin*, March, 1942, p. 11.

normally drawn from a different cultural plane.<sup>63</sup> Adoptive parents are scarce, too. They themselves feel too insecure to assume responsibility for a child, and are withdrawing their applications. Some of them were afraid they might be accused of draft-dodging by putting a husband into the father class.<sup>64</sup> Mothers who wish to work and to keep their children at home are asking for Homemaker Service. But this service has been provided temporarily for mothers who are incapacitated, and it cannot be geared to a permanent program when funds and personnel are shrinking. The problem is solved in some cases by boarding homes which take in both parent and children, and in others by "block mothers" who take on the responsibilities of motherhood for all their neighbors who work. These last two arrangements have the fault of providing minimum supervision by authorized agencies.

The increased demand upon the curtailed supply of placement homes will result, it is feared, in the tolerance of substandard foster homes and in the overburdening of good ones;<sup>65</sup> for if the agencies do not place the children, parents have to take their chances with any sort of placement. Many youngsters are being shuttled around to a day nursery or to school, then to the home of a neighbor, and finally back to their own home whenever their parent happens to be there. But some, less fortunate, are taken to unlicensed nurseries. They may share the fate of the children found in one of these nurseries—crowded into damp cellars, treated inhumanly, and given insufficient food.<sup>66</sup>

### *Juvenile Delinquency.*

Every subject touched upon up to this point has in it some factor which leads to the increase in juvenile delinquency that is alarming society: the conditions in schools; wartime nerves; attitudes of hate, violence, and opportunism; the exploitation of working children; the thrill of the pay check; the employment of mothers; and the lack of adequate substitute care. Together, these factors produce a situation that Americans have regarded as contrary to their standards. The chil-

<sup>63</sup> Florence van Sickler, "War Accentuates Old Problems of Child Placing Agency," in *The Impact of War on Children's Services*, Child Welfare League of America, New York, 1943, p. 22.

<sup>64</sup> Howard W. Hopkirk, "Trends in Applications for Service," *Child Welfare League Bulletin*, January, 1942, p. 10.

<sup>65</sup> Dorothy Hutchinson, *In Quest of Foster Parents*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1943, p. 118.

<sup>66</sup> "Eight-Hour Orphans," p. 21.



dren are in no way responsible for it; and subconsciously, if not consciously, they feel that they have been taken in by their teachers and parents.

James Johnson, who has observed the children of many nations under wartime conditions, notices a common reaction to adult failure. He says: "Without apparent reason to them, [children] have suddenly lost what they loved most—the dependability of the family. Psychoanalysts . . . call it [their reaction] 'auto-humiliation' and they point out that its inevitable consequence is an irresistible urge toward vengeance, which is first directed against the loved family itself—that is, against the existing society."<sup>67</sup> Unfortunately these children, who have already paid in disillusion, will have to pay further for their vengefulness.

### *Illegitimate Children.*

"Children born out of wedlock are confronted with many serious hazards. . . . The infant mortality rate among them is from two to three times higher than among children born in wedlock. Most of them are deprived of normal family life, and their histories as a rule show repeated changes from one caretaker to another."<sup>68</sup>

War has always increased the number of these unfortunates, and there are many indications that World War II was no exception. In normal times there are four times as many boy delinquents as girls; but in 1942, boy delinquents increased 8 per cent, and girls 31 per cent.<sup>69</sup> In some parts of the country, requests for unmarried mothers as domestic servants have more than doubled during the war. The Ingleside Home in Buffalo has a larger number of women and births per month.<sup>70</sup> One agency reports 35 per cent more cases in 1942 than in 1941.<sup>71</sup>

War has directly added to the difficulties of legitimizing these babies and of providing a home for them. First, employment is easy for unmarried mothers. Second, escape is open to the fathers, most of whom were in the service, whether or not they were at the time of the relationship. Many would have worked out a satisfactory solution with the

<sup>67</sup> James Wood Johnson, "The Vengeance of Europe's Children," *The Christian Century*, April, 1943, p. 488.

<sup>68</sup> James H. S. Bossard, *Social Change and Social Problems*, Harper & Brothers, New York, rev. ed., 1938, p. 666.

<sup>69</sup> "The Impact of War on Children and Youth," pp. 135-137.

<sup>70</sup> Levi, Lotie S., "Unmarried Mothers in Wartime," in *The Impact of War on Children's Services*, pp. 4-8.

<sup>71</sup> Van Sickler, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

girl had they not been separated. There is the case of Mary and John, who might have married in normal times. But John, learning of Mary's pregnancy after he had enlisted, refused to consider marriage during the war. The baby was thus deprived of a home, for Mary could not keep him.<sup>72</sup> Third, the regulations of wartime life make it difficult for some of the parents to marry even if they are willing. Susie went to an Army camp to marry the father of her child, but he could not get leave, and they were afraid to take anyone into their confidence. She finally went to the Ingleside Home, her money nearly gone, and asked for help. Another girl was thwarted because the boy to whom she was engaged was sent out of the country before they could be married. He is now feared lost in action. His baby is illegitimate.<sup>73</sup> Even in the cases where adoption is the best solution, these babies are at a disadvantage. Many such fathers, being out of reach, see no need to admit paternity. Some know the girls so slightly as to be in doubt. The girls themselves often do not know the boys well enough to enable a case worker to get a history of a baby's father. But the most thoughtful adoptive parents, who usually make the best homes for children, are eager for such information and are prone to overlook the babies with casual histories. Finally, at a time when many girls are waiting to free themselves from their illegitimate children, and when opportunities for legal placement are shrinking, there is always the danger of an extension of the illicit trade which extorts a living from the wages of such girls in return for relieving them of their burden.

### *Conclusion.*

It is clear that the war has had immediate impacts upon many phases of child life. Situations have resulted in spite of careful plans for their prevention. Some of these already portend definite long-range results; but only time will disclose their total effects upon the child.

### SUMMARY

1. War has played a recurrent role in the history of nations, which means that in the past it has been a recurrent factor in child development. The recent war through which this country passed has been particularly important because of the proportion of persons and efforts involved.

<sup>72</sup> Levi, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 5-7.

2. War affects family and child life in many ways. With particular reference to World War II, the following results are noted: (a) the acceleration of the rate of family formation, (b) the proportion of ill-advised marriages, (c) a temporary rise in the birth rate, (d) the separation of marital mates, (e) the creation of a background of anxiety for many family relationships, (f) the modification or mutilation of the family structure, (g) an increase in the stresses and strains in parent-child relationships, (h) an increase in family disorganization during the postwar years, and (i) an increase in the social responsibility for child care.

3. With particular reference to children, the effects of war are evident in connection with changes in schools, the effect of wartime excitement on children's nervous systems, the wartime conditioning of attitudes, special problems of children in industry and agriculture, the increase in the number of children whose mothers are working, difficulties in child placing, and the increase in juvenile delinquency and in illegitimate parenthood.



## Part VII:

### The Changing Status of Childhood



## Children as a Population Element

Preceding chapters of this book have been devoted to an analysis of the role of group interaction and the cultural milieu in child development. The emphasis has been upon the individual child and the situational factors in his rearing. There is, however, another phase of the whole process of child development which needs to be considered. This is the relationship of children as an age group to other age groups in the population. Basically this may be defined as the problem of the status of children as a population element, and it is to this phase of the sociology of child development that the remaining chapters of this volume are devoted. Included in the discussions of this phase are historical changes in the status of children, with particular reference to their present social position; social movements directed to further changes in directions which are considered desirable; and some basic problems of culture correlations which are involved. First, however, it is necessary to consider the age structure of the population, the factors which determine its form in any society, some indication of the forms it takes in various parts of this country, the nature of functional age groupings, the social significance of the age structure, and child status conceived in terms of social process. These constitute the substance of this chapter.

### THE AGE STRUCTURE OF THE POPULATION

One of the basic facts about any given society is its age structure. This means the relative size and arrangement of the successive age layers that are represented in the population. At the bottom of the structure are the lower age groups. Arranged by years, the first layer consists of people under 1, next are those between 1 and 2, and so on through the length of life. For convenience in statistical tables and

graphic representation, these ages are usually combined into five-year groups.

In a normally growing society, with no in- or out-migration and with conditions of life relatively stable and persistent, these age groups or layers take the form of an elongated isosceles triangle, and, because of annual depletions through death, each succeeding layer grows narrower. As the ages advance, there are fewer and fewer individuals in the respective groups, so the figure tapers off to a thin line after 65. The graphic representation of this is called a population pyramid.

In actual practice this population pyramid takes diverse forms in different populations, depending upon the relative operation of the factors which determine it. There are three such fundamental factors. The first is the birth rate. When the birth rate increases, the lower age groups broaden in relation to the rest of the pyramid; when it declines over a period of years, their relative width decreases. Obviously, either modification changes the shape of the pyramid as a whole. Second is the death rate, differentiated on an age basis. If a relatively large number of persons in the lower age groups die, the base of the pyramid contracts correspondingly; similarly, a low death rate in the upper age groups causes that part of the pyramid to bulge. The third factor is migration, with special reference to the age characteristics of those migrating. The migration of any particular age group from one area into another obviously creates a corresponding contraction and expansion, respectively, of the population pyramid at the age level involved.

Each society or social area, then, has its own distinctive population figure, a product of the operation of these three factors at the particular time and place involved. In the contemporary United States, the population pyramid of the South has a relatively broad base and a relatively narrow spread in the working age groups. In the Northeast, these facts are reversed. Rural areas show an excess of persons under twenty; urban areas, of people between 20 and 45. In villages, many more persons are in the upper age groups, whereas suburban areas often contain an unusually large number of young couples and children. Pioneer communities have a preponderance of younger middle-class males. The foreign-born in the United States have an unusually small ratio of children.<sup>1</sup>

Just as each social area has its own distinctive age structure, so

<sup>1</sup>For an extended discussion of these variations, the reader is referred to Paul Landis, *Population Problems*, American Book Company, New York, 1943, chap. 15.



variations occur from one era to another in the same society. Changing birth, death, and migration rates over a period of several decades can bring about striking changes. Such a change has occurred in the United States in recent years and is generally referred to as the aging of our population. The operating factors which produced this change may be summarized as follows: First, during the generation after the Civil War, the birth rate tended to remain high. Second, from 1880 to 1914, there was a large-scale immigration of younger age groups into

TABLE 9. Five-Year Age Groups, by Percentage, U S Population, 1870-1940

| AGE GROUP | 1940 | 1930 | 1920 | 1910 | 1900 | 1890 | 1880 | 1870 |
|-----------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Under 5   | 8.0  | 9.3  | 10.9 | 11.6 | 12.1 | 12.2 | 13.8 | 14.3 |
| 5-9       | 8.1  | 10.3 | 10.8 | 10.6 | 11.7 | 12.1 | 12.9 | 12.5 |
| 10-14     | 8.9  | 9.8  | 10.1 | 9.9  | 10.6 | 11.2 | 11.4 | 12.4 |
| 15-19     | 9.4  | 9.4  | 8.9  | 9.9  | 9.9  | 10.5 | 10.0 | 10.5 |
| 20-24     | 8.8  | 8.9  | 8.8  | 9.8  | 9.7  | 9.9  | 10.1 | 9.7  |
| 25-29     | 8.4  | 8.0  | 8.6  | 8.9  | 8.6  | 8.3  | 8.1  | 8.0  |
| 30-34     | 7.8  | 7.4  | 7.6  | 7.6  | 7.3  | 7.3  | 6.7  | 6.6  |
| 35-39     | 7.2  | 7.5  | 7.4  | 7.0  | 6.5  | 6.2  | 6.0  | 6.0  |
| 40-44     | 6.7  | 6.5  | 6.0  | 5.7  | 5.6  | 5.1  | 4.9  | 5.0  |
| 45-49     | 6.3  | 5.7  | 5.5  | 4.9  | 4.5  | 4.4  | 4.2  | 4.1  |
| 50-54     | 5.5  | 4.9  | 4.5  | 4.2  | 3.9  | 3.7  | 3.7  | 3.5  |
| 55-59     | 4.4  | 3.8  | 3.4  | 3.0  | 2.9  | 2.7  | 2.5  | 2.3  |
| 60-64     | 3.6  | 3.1  | 2.8  | 2.5  | 2.4  | 2.3  | 2.2  | 2.0  |
| 65-69     | 2.9  | 2.3  | 2.0  | 1.8  | 1.7  | 1.6  | 1.4  | 1.3  |
| 70-74     | 2.0  | 1.6  | 1.3  | 1.2  | 1.2  | 1.1  | 1.0  | 0.9  |
| 75-       | 2.0  | 1.6  | 1.4  | 1.2  | 1.2  | 1.1  | 1.0  | 0.9  |

this country. These two factors in combination meant a relatively large population in the advanced age groups in recent years. Third, the death rate declined, particularly after 1900. Included here was the fact that many people in the older age brackets lived longer. Finally, since 1910, and most noticeably since 1920, the birth rate declined. In combination, these factors made for a marked contraction of the population pyramid in the lower age groups and its relative expansion at the upper age levels. These changes are sometimes simplified and expressed in terms of the changing median age of the population, which shows an increase from 16 years in 1800, to 21.4 in 1890, and to 29 in 1940. More specifically, these changes are revealed in the data in Table 9.

#### FUNCTIONAL AND STATUS GROUPINGS WITHIN THE AGE STRUCTURE

Statistical summaries and graphic representations of the age structure are presented usually in terms of one- or five-year classifications. In the

organization of the life of society, however, chronological ages are grouped on the basis of function and status. Reference was made in Chapter XV to the universal practice of age grading, and Linton asserts that age and sex categories are more important for an understanding of the operation of most societies than are family systems.<sup>2</sup>

All societies recognize at least three age groups: child, adult, and elder. This corresponds roughly to a threefold functional classification on the basis of economic production and consumption. The child group is economically dependent, not yet part of the productive system. As a group, it is in process of preparation for subsequent usefulness. In financial terms, it is a liability at the moment but is considered as an investment in future values. The adult is the producing group; it carries the burden of maintaining the society, which includes the maintenance of the two dependent groups. The elders are the second dependent group, having reverted to this status after a span of usefulness, and being maintained now as an obligation for past contributions.

Each of these main classes may be divided in any given society into various subgroupings. Linton points out how in certain African tribes the entire male population is divided into units composed of those born in the same year or within two- or three-year intervals.<sup>3</sup> The Inca of Peru distinguished ten age groupings for males alone.<sup>4</sup> Our interest is centered upon the divisions recognized in the lower age groups in our contemporary culture. There are today four such divisions: infant, preschool child, child, and youth. The term infant is used customarily to mean a child under the age of 1. The preschool years cover the ages of 2 to 5, inclusive. The word child tends to be used in the literature in two ways, one general and the other specific. As a general term, the word means a young person ranging in age from birth to an upper level not exactly determined, but approximately the fifteenth to the sixteenth year. Specifically, the term child is used for children from 6 to 14 years, inclusive. In recent years, the word youth has been used with the somewhat expansive interpretative range of 15 to 24, inclusive.

<sup>2</sup> Ralph Linton, "A Neglected Aspect of Social Organization," *American Journal of Sociology*, May, 1940, p. 872.

<sup>3</sup> Ralph Linton, *The Study of Man*, D. Appleton-Century Company, Inc., New York, 1936, p. 118.

<sup>4</sup> Ralph Linton, "Age and Sex Categories," *American Sociological Review*, October, 1942, p. 593.

*Modern Legislators Define Childhood.*

The drawing of precise lines identifying certain age groups and assigning them a legal status or function has become increasingly frequent in modern culture, chiefly because of various types of social legislation based on age distinctions. A large part of this legislation is aimed at the protection of childhood against certain social hazards; other laws are permissive in character, such as those having to do with the operation of motor vehicles, voting, enlistment for military service, and the like. Legislation of such kinds requires the designation of some age limit above or below which a particular law, function, or responsibility does not apply.

The more common attempts of legislators to define childhood have centered in recent years about such matters as age of adoption, rape, marriage, compulsory school attendance, employment, juvenile court jurisdiction, and dependency. Most of these laws in the United States have been enacted on a state basis and passed over a period of years, so that naturally considerable variation exists. Only certain general summaries will be made here. (1) Most laws requiring consent for adoption specify 12 to 14 years. (2) Legislation specifying rape mentions chiefly 16 or 18 years. (3) For marriage, the parents' consent is required for girls in most states up to 18 years, and for boys up to 21 years. (4) Compulsory school attendance is required in most states to age 16, with some recent advances to 17 and 18 years. (5) Age limitations on employment tend naturally to coincide with those on compulsory school attendance. (6) Federal legislation fixing the maximum age for aid to dependent children followed the school and employment ages commonly designated by the states, i.e., 16 to 18 years. (7) The most frequently established age for juvenile court jurisdiction is now 18 years, having been advanced from 16 years in the more recent acts. In short, child protective legislation covers, with few exceptions, the first fifteen years of life; the more recent legislation has advanced the ages by one or more years to protect children from being treated as adults too soon.<sup>5</sup>

## THE SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE AGE STRUCTURE

Once the fact is grasped that age groups have differing functional roles in society, the fundamental importance of the age structure be-

<sup>5</sup> Isabel Gordon Carter, "Legislators Define Childhood," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, November, 1940, pp. 38-41.

comes apparent. Obviously, the structure sets the pattern of the human resources and social responsibilities of a society at any given time. Changes in this pattern over a period of time in the same society involve basic readjustments. Differentials between social areas in the same country, or between one country and another, may change not only the status of any particular age group, but also affect the relative position of the country as a whole. Some of the specific ways in which the age structure is of social importance will be considered briefly.

1. The age structure is one of the determinants of the productive capacity of a population. This is true for the very obvious reason that the economic maintenance of any society rests upon a designated middle age span, from which it follows that changes in the relative proportion of this age span result in corresponding changes in the labor potential. Levin has attempted to calculate in statistical terms the earning capacity in terms of age.<sup>6</sup> His conclusion is that the maximum working capacity occurs at 40 years of age. Using this maximum point as 100 in his index, he rates age 15 at 50 and age 74 at 42, with the intervening years distributed up and down from his 40-year maximum.

It is clear that a more precise rating would have to be worked out with reference to each occupational group. The high point of efficiency for unskilled labor would naturally be at a much lower age than for such professions as the law, medicine, and teaching. A considerable literature has grown up around the question of how old is old, and when; but such discussions after all involve only the details in the calculation which Levin attempted, and however these details are determined, the basic fact remains that the age make-up has great importance for national efficiency and productivity.

2. Similarly, the age structure affects the consumption pattern of a society. Each age group has its own distinctive needs for commodities and services, and as these needs are expressed in the democracy of the market, the entire economic structure is affected thereby. Particularly is this evident when the larger age groups are compared, such as children with the aged. Children need baby carriages, baby clothes, milk, toys, scooters, sleds, express wagons, footballs, and ballet slippers. There is scant market for these goods among people past fifty, just as children do not consume canes, whiskey, false teeth, wheel chairs, pipes, and

<sup>6</sup>N. P. Levin, "Statistical Study of the Economic and Sociological Significance of Population Age," *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, March, 1938, pp. 41 ff.

Melvin has pointed out that in villages where age dominates, recreational life is institutionalized, routinized, formal, and patronizing.<sup>9</sup> It is not unlikely that the problems of juvenile delinquency which have perplexed many areas in recent years have arisen chiefly from sudden, large-scale changes in the age structure, involving the influx of many teen-agers into communities whose recreational life was adapted to, and dominated by, much older age groups.

5. The age structure determines the ratio of aged dependents to supporting adults. For purposes of the present discussion, the age group 20 to 64 will be considered the supporting adult population, and those 65 and over as the aged dependent. Edwards, analyzing the data for 1930 thus conceived, has shown a variation in the ratio of persons 65 and over per 1000 supporting adults, by regions, from 76 in the Southwest (Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona) to 108 for the Middle states (Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa and Missouri); and by states, from 67 in Arizona to 160 in Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont.<sup>10</sup> The data for 1940 are presented in different form in Tables 10, 11, 12, and 13. These tables show similar striking differences by regions, states, and population divisions, especially when considered in relation to the younger dependent age groups.

The increasing seriousness of the problem of the aged dependent can be seen in the field of political developments during the years between the two World Wars. Two aspects will be noted briefly. One is the emergence of an old age element as a pressure group. Constituting a substantial and increasing part of the electorate in this country, with leisure to devote to politics, they have given evidence of marked susceptibility to demagogues who have promised them utopia in exchange for votes. The formation of a political group on the basis of a rapidly growing age group in our population presents new and possibly difficult problems in the democratic process.<sup>11</sup> The second aspect is the threat of such demands upon the public treasury in relation to other kinds of welfare activities, particularly those concerned with education and other child welfare projects. This presents the unique situation of an age group with voting status competing with an age group that

<sup>9</sup> Bruce Melvin, *Age and Sex Distribution in Relation to Rural Behavior*, Publications of the American Sociological Society, 1929, pp. 93-100.

<sup>10</sup> Newton Edwards, "Youth as a Population Element," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, November, 1937, p. 9.

<sup>11</sup> Landis, *op. cit.*, pp. 294-295.

must rely upon other appeals. More will be said about this later in this book.

6. Finally, the age structure determines the extent of the child rearing and child care which society must undertake. This in turn affects the status of childhood. Selected comparisons will reveal how

TABLE 10. Percentage Distribution, by Color, Nativity, Urban and Rural, Classified by Three Age Groupings, 1940

| AGE GROUPING         | U.S. | WHITE | NON-WHITE | FOR-<br>EIGN-<br>BORN<br>WHITE | NATIVE-<br>BORN<br>WHITE<br>OF<br>NATIVE-<br>BORN<br>PARENT-<br>AGE | NATIVE-<br>BORN<br>WHITE<br>OF FOR-<br>EIGN OR<br>MIXED<br>PAR-<br>ENTS | UR-<br>BAN | RURAL<br>NON-<br>FARM | RURAL<br>FARM |
|----------------------|------|-------|-----------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|-----------------------|---------------|
| 0-19 years           | 34.4 | 33.7  | 40.4      | 2.2                            | 39.3                                                                | 29.7                                                                    | 30.1       | 36.9                  | 42.7          |
| 20-64 years          | 58.8 | 59.2  | 54.8      | 79.8                           | 65.0                                                                | 64.8                                                                    | 63.4       | 55.8                  | 50.8          |
| 65 years<br>and over | 6.8  | 7.1   | 4.8       | 18.0                           | 5.7                                                                 | 6.5                                                                     | 6.5        | 7.3                   | 6.5           |

TABLE 11. Percentage Distribution, by Regions, by Three Age Groupings, 1940

| AGE GROUPING         | NEW<br>ENG-<br>LAND | MID-<br>DLE<br>AT-<br>LANTIC | EAST<br>NORTH<br>CEN-<br>TRAL | WEST<br>NORTH<br>CEN-<br>TRAL | SOUTH<br>CEN-<br>TRAL | EAST<br>SOUTH<br>CEN-<br>TRAL | WEST<br>SOUTH<br>CEN-<br>TRAL | MOUN-<br>TAIN | PA-<br>CIFIC |
|----------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------|--------------|
| 0-19 years           | 31.4                | 30.9                         | 32.2                          | 33.9                          | 39.6                  | 41.5                          | 39.2                          | 38.1          | 28.3         |
| 20-64 years          | 60.1                | 62.3                         | 60.4                          | 57.9                          | 54.9                  | 52.7                          | 55.3                          | 55.9          | 62.5         |
| 65 years<br>and over | 8.5                 | 6.8                          | 7.4                           | 8.2                           | 5.5                   | 5.8                           | 5.5                           | 6.0           | 9.2          |

striking the differences may be. For example, in his analysis of the 1930 census data, Edwards points out the following facts:

The task of the supporting adult group, 20 to 64, in caring for its young dependents of elementary school age is 80 per cent greater in the Southeast than in the Far West, and about 44 per cent greater than in either the Middle states or the Northeast. State variations in the burden of the nurture and education are even more marked. For one group of states the ratios of children 5 to 13 to adults are as follows: South Carolina, 523; North Carolina, 491; Alabama, 441; New Mexico, 445; Utah, 438; and West Virginia, 438. In another group of states, at the other end of the scale, the ratios are strikingly lower: Ohio, 296; Massachusetts, 283; Illinois, 270; New York, 254; and California, 225. . . . Nor is the burden of child care

TABLE 12. Percentage Distribution, by Selected States, by Three Age Groupings, 1940

| AGE GROUPINGS     | ALA. | CAL. | CONN. | FLA. | MAINE | MISS. | NEW MEX |
|-------------------|------|------|-------|------|-------|-------|---------|
| 0-19 years        | 42.9 | 27.7 | 30.4  | 34.0 | 35.4  | 43.2  | 44.7    |
| 20-64 years       | 52.3 | 64.3 | 62.0  | 59.1 | 55.1  | 51.5  | 49.9    |
| 65 years and over | 4.8  | 8.0  | 7.6   | 6.9  | 9.5   | 5.3   | 5.4     |

| AGE GROUPINGS     | N.J. | N.Y. | NORTH CAR. | PA.  | SOUTH CAR. | UTAH | WASH. |
|-------------------|------|------|------------|------|------------|------|-------|
| 0-19 years        | 30.0 | 28.9 | 43.7       | 34.0 | 45.6       | 42.1 | 29.6  |
| 20-64 years       | 63.3 | 64.3 | 51.8       | 59.1 | 50.2       | 52.4 | 62.1  |
| 65 years and over | 6.7  | 6.8  | 4.5        | 6.9  | 4.2        | 5.5  | 8.3   |

TABLE 13. Percentage Distribution, by Selected Cities, by Three Age Groupings, 1940

| AGE GROUPING      | AL-BAY<br>NY | BAL-TI-<br>MORE | BOS-<br>TON | CHI-<br>CAGO | DEN-<br>VER | DE-<br>TROIT | GARY | JER-<br>SEY<br>CITY | KAN-<br>SAS<br>CITY,<br>MO. | KNOX-<br>VILLE |
|-------------------|--------------|-----------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|------|---------------------|-----------------------------|----------------|
| 0-19 years        | 26.1         | 30.0            | 29.8        | 27.8         | 28.1        | 31.2         | 32.3 | 30.6                | 25.4                        | 25.4           |
| 20-64 years       | 65.8         | 63.6            | 62.2        | 66.4         | 63.1        | 65.8         | 64.6 | 63.9                | 66.7                        | 60.8           |
| 65 years and over | 8.1          | 6.4             | 8.0         | 5.8          | 8.8         | 4.0          | 3.1  | 5.5                 | 7.9                         | 4.9            |

| AGE GROUPING      | LONG BEACH | LOS AN-<br>GELES | MI-<br>AMI | NEW YORK | OAK-<br>LAND | PHILA-<br>DEL-<br>PHIA | ST. LOUIS | SAN DIEGO | SAN FRAN-<br>CISCO |
|-------------------|------------|------------------|------------|----------|--------------|------------------------|-----------|-----------|--------------------|
| 0-19              | 23.6       | 23.8             | 25.8       | 27.7     | 24.7         | 29.7                   | 26.7      | 27.6      | 21.0               |
| 20-64 years       | 64.9       | 67.7             | 67.9       | 66.7     | 66.9         | 63.5                   | 65.7      | 63.0      | 70.9               |
| 65 years and over | 11.5       | 8.5              | 6.3        | 5.6      | 8.4          | 7.0                    | 7.6       | 9.4       | 8.1                |

counterbalanced in those areas where youth are relatively the most numerous by low or moderate ratios of older persons, 65 and over, to productive adults. If the two naturally dependent groups, those of school age, 5 to 17, and those 65 and over, are considered together, areas in which youth are relatively the most numerous are still carrying a disproportionately heavy burden of dependents.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Edwards, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-10.

The data for 1940, as presented in Tables 10 to 13, reveal similar variations. Comparing rural farm with urban populations in terms of our threefold groups, we find that in the former, half of the population is in the productive years 20 to 64, and the other half is in the natural dependent groups. In urban areas, about two-thirds of the population is in the productive span, and one-third in the two natural dependent groups. Regional differences, as indicated in Table 11, are almost as great; those for selected states, shown in Table 12, are even greater. Obviously here is a differential that is highly significant in determining the status of childhood.

TABLE 14. Elementary Public School Enrollment, Selected Years, 1880-1940

| YEAR      | ENROLLMENT |
|-----------|------------|
| 1879-1880 | 9,757,118  |
| 1889-1890 | 12,519,668 |
| 1899-1900 | 14,983,859 |
| 1909-1910 | 16,898,791 |
| 1919-1920 | 19,377,927 |
| 1929-1930 | 21,278,593 |
| 1935-1936 | 20,392,561 |
| 1939-1940 | 18,832,098 |

Particular reference should be made to recent changes in the age structure of the population, and their bearing upon child problems. Table 15 indicates the changes, state by state, in the percentages of the population under 15 years of age in 1930 and 1940. Translating these changes from percentage into actual numbers of children means a tremendous decrease in the extent of child care in the United States. Table 14 shows the effect of the changing age structure upon the specific responsibility for elementary school education. Despite an increase of 7.2 per cent in the total population from 1930 to 1940, there was an actual decrease of almost two and a half million children of elementary-school age. This in turn foreshadows a corresponding decline of high-school enrollments in the 1940's, barring any marked change in the proportion of young people going to high school.

Finally, the relative proportions of the child element of the population that must be reared and developed by the adult productive group must be related to the general economic well-being of the particular area under consideration. Table 16, prepared by Edwards, shows the



TABLE 15. Percentage of Population Under 15 Years of Age, by States, 1930 and 1940

| STATE                | PERCENTAGE OF<br>POPULATION<br>UNDER 15, 1930 | PERCENTAGE OF<br>POPULATION<br>UNDER 15, 1940 |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| Alabama              | 35.9                                          | 32.2                                          |
| Arizona              | 32.9                                          | 30.8                                          |
| Arkansas             | 35.9                                          | 31.0                                          |
| California           | 22.8                                          | 19.8                                          |
| Colorado             | 28.8                                          | 25.6                                          |
| Connecticut          | 27.8                                          | 21.3                                          |
| Delaware             | 27.0                                          | 22.7                                          |
| District of Columbia | 20.6 (Lowest)                                 | 17.8                                          |
| Florida              | 29.8                                          | 25.1                                          |
| Georgia              | 34.8                                          | 30.6                                          |
| Idaho                | 32.8                                          | 28.6                                          |
| Illinois             | 26.0                                          | 21.6                                          |
| Indiana              | 27.7                                          | 23.9                                          |
| Iowa                 | 28.3                                          | 25.6                                          |
| Kansas               | 28.8                                          | 25.5                                          |
| Kentucky             | 34.0                                          | 30.3                                          |
| Louisiana            | 33.6                                          | 29.7                                          |
| Maine                | 28.7                                          | 26.1                                          |
| Maryland             | 28.3                                          | 23.8                                          |
| Massachusetts        | 26.5                                          | 21.8                                          |
| Michigan             | 29.1                                          | 25.0                                          |
| Minnesota            | 28.9                                          | 25.7                                          |
| Mississippi          | 35.5                                          | 32.7                                          |
| Missouri             | 26.7                                          | 23.5                                          |
| Montana              | 29.7                                          | 25.4                                          |
| Nebraska             | 29.7                                          | 25.1                                          |
| Nevada               | 24.2                                          | 22.5                                          |
| New Hampshire        | 26.9                                          | 22.4                                          |
| New Jersey           | 27.1                                          | 21.0                                          |
| New Mexico           | 36.6                                          | 34.5                                          |
| New York             | 25.1                                          | 20.6                                          |
| North Carolina       | 37.9                                          | 32.4                                          |
| North Dakota         | 34.3                                          | 29.6                                          |
| Ohio                 | 27.4                                          | 22.8                                          |
| Oklahoma             | 33.7                                          | 29.6                                          |
| Oregon               | 24.3                                          | 21.2                                          |
| Pennsylvania         | 29.9                                          | 24.2                                          |
| Rhode Island         | 27.9                                          | 22.1                                          |
| South Carolina       | 38.7 (Highest)                                | 33.8                                          |
| South Dakota         | 32.5                                          | 27.7                                          |
| Tennessee            | 33.2                                          | 29.3                                          |
| Texas                | 32.2                                          | 28.1                                          |
| Utah                 | 35.7                                          | 31.5                                          |
| Vermont              | 28.3                                          | 25.7                                          |
| Virginia             | 33.8                                          | 28.6                                          |
| Washington           | 24.9                                          | 21.1                                          |
| West Virginia        | 36.3                                          | 31.2                                          |
| Wisconsin            | 28.8                                          | 26.0                                          |
| Wyoming              | 30.3                                          | 26.6                                          |

TABLE 16. Percentage of Child Population Aged 5 to 17, 1930, and Percentage of Nation's Income in the 48 States\*

| REGION AND STATE     | PER CENT OF   |             | REGION AND STATE | PER CENT OF   |             |
|----------------------|---------------|-------------|------------------|---------------|-------------|
|                      | CHIL-<br>DREN | IN-<br>COME |                  | CHIL-<br>DREN | IN-<br>COME |
| Northeast            | 29.66         | 42.93       | Northwest        |               |             |
| Maine                | 0.62          | 0.56        | Montana          | 0.45          | 0.41        |
| New Hampshire        | 0.34          | 0.33        | Idaho            | 0.40          | 0.30        |
| Vermont              | 0.28          | 0.25        | Wyoming          | 0.18          | 0.19        |
| Massachusetts        | 3.17          | 4.51        | Colorado         | 0.83          | 0.78        |
| Rhode Island         | 0.54          | 0.66        | Utah             | 0.49          | 0.33        |
| Connecticut          | 1.28          | 1.76        |                  |               |             |
| New York             | 8.85          | 18.61       | Southeast        | 24.41         | 10.01       |
| New Jersey           | 3.12          | 4.37        | Virginia         | 2.27          | 1.14        |
| Delaware             | 0.18          | 0.34        | North Carolina   | 3.26          | 1.09        |
| Pennsylvania         | 8.08          | 8.56        | South Carolina   | 1.86          | 0.50        |
| Maryland             | 1.28          | 1.42        | Georgia          | 2.83          | 1.09        |
| District of Columbia | 0.28          | 0.65        | Florida          | 1.20          | 0.86        |
| West Virginia        | 1.65          | 0.91        | Kentucky         | 2.39          | 1.13        |
|                      |               |             | Tennessee        | 2.38          | 0.99        |
| Middle States        | 26.06         | 28.38       | Alabama          | 2.59          | 0.95        |
| Ohio                 | 5.07          | 5.74        | Mississippi      | 1.94          | 0.63        |
| Indiana              | 2.48          | 2.17        | Arkansas         | 1.77          | 0.63        |
| Illinois             | 5.61          | 8.17        | Louisiana        | 1.92          | 1.00        |
| Michigan             | 3.79          | 4.53        |                  |               |             |
| Wisconsin            | 2.36          | 2.18        | Southwest        | 8.13          | 5.22        |
| Minnesota            | 2.08          | 1.71        | Oklahoma         | 2.20          | 1.31        |
| Iowa                 | 1.95          | 1.31        | Texas            | 5.16          | 3.34        |
| Missouri             | 2.72          | 2.57        | New Mexico       | 0.40          | 0.22        |
|                      |               |             | Arizona          | 0.37          | 0.35        |
| Northwest            | 6.26          | 4.59        | Far West         | 5.48          | 8.87        |
| North Dakota         | 0.65          | 0.31        | Nevada           | 0.06          | 0.10        |
| South Dakota         | 0.62          | 0.32        | Washington       | 1.13          | 1.43        |
| Nebraska             | 1.13          | 0.78        | Oregon           | 0.68          | 0.78        |
| Kansas               | 1.51          | 1.17        | California       | 3.61          | 6.56        |

\* Income estimates from Maurice Leven, Harold C. Moulton, and Clark Warburton, *America's Capacity to Consume*, The Brookings Institution, Washington, D. C., 1934, p. 172.

percentage of the child population aged 5 to 17 in 1930, and the distribution of the nation's income by region and state. Here, again, we find very striking differences. The state of New York, with 8.85 per cent of the nation's children, has 18.6 per cent of the national income; South Carolina, with 1.8 per cent of the children, has one half of one per cent of the national income; California has almost twice as large a share of the nation's income as of its children; Tennessee has almost two and a half times the share of children that it has of income.

## CHILD STATUS IN TERMS OF SOCIAL PROCESS

Underlying the entire discussion in this chapter is the concept of a social process. This process is one of conflict, involving shifting balances between functional age groupings. Many social scientists have come to emphasize this as a fundamental social process. More than a quarter of a century ago, Lowie wrote: "The conception of society as a structure segmented into age-layers . . . reveals genuine insight into sociological dynamics. . . . Its importance must be acknowledged as overwhelming." It is "too deeply rooted in human nature not to loom largely amidst all the flux of cultural variation, though the class of greatest prominence will vary, as will the ideals of the age classes."<sup>13</sup> More recent is the implied emphasis upon the age conflict process in the study of the ascription of status by Linton and others. Similarly, Ross identifies it as one of the basic conflict processes.<sup>14</sup> This process may go on between any particular age groups and it may take a variety of forms; we are concerned here with the relationship between the three groupings of dependent children, productive adults, and dependent elders as defined in this chapter. For purposes of clarity in discussion, they may be thought of in terms of a seesaw, the two dependent groups occupying the opposite ends of the board, the board resting upon the middle trestle, which is the adult producing group. This trestle is the supporting base of the social process, and its characteristics, such as size, virility, and strength, determine both the size of the dependent groups that can be supported and the stability of the process as a whole. Similarly, changes in any one of the three groups affect correspondingly the status of the other two.

It is this larger conception of the process as a whole that needs to be grasped by the reader. The status of childhood is not an independent development, capable of modification at will and without regard to the size and status of all the elements in the population. The status of children in any society and at any particular time is a phase or a product of the larger process of the interaction between the age groupings of the entire society. This is basic to an understanding of the remaining chapters in this volume. Not that child status is entirely a matter of the arithmetic of population; the role of other factors,

<sup>13</sup> Robert H. Lowie, *Primitive Society*, Boni & Liveright, 1920, New York, pp. 314-315.

<sup>14</sup> E. A. Ross, *Principles of Sociology*, D. Appleton-Century Company, Inc., New York, 1929, chap. 18.

ideological, traditional, sociopsychological, and cultural must be recognized. An appreciation of all these factors, as well as a sense of the larger social process involved, will, it is hoped, appear in the succeeding chapters.

#### SUMMARY

1. Each society has its characteristic age structure that reveals the relative size of the varying age groups in its population.

2. The age structure is the product of three factors: the birth rate, the death rate, and migration. Changes in any or all of these factors produce different age structures at different times and places.

3. Age classes are grouped on the basis of function and status. These vary from one society to another, but all societies recognize at least three: child, adult, and elder. This division is based largely on economic considerations, the adult being the producing and the other two the dependent consuming groups.

4. The drawing of precise lines at certain ages and the assigning of legal status on the basis of these lines have become increasingly frequent in modern culture. Attempts by legislators to define childhood have centered in recent years around such matters as adoption, rape, marriage, school attendance, employment, and juvenile court jurisdiction.

5. The age structure is socially significant because it helps to determine (a) the productive capacity; (b) the consumption pattern; (c) the reproductive capacity; (d) the nature of many social problems, such as health and recreation; (e) the ratio of aged dependents to supporting adults; (f) the extent of the child-rearing problem.

6. Child status is the result of the social process of the conflict between age groups in the population.

## The Historical Status of Childhood



Childhood is humanity in its first and formative stage. Its history, therefore, coincides with that of the human race; its challenge is its inevitable continuity. If, then, there is any subject which ought to be approached historically, it is childhood.

Unfortunately, the history of childhood has never been written, and there is some doubt whether it ever can be written. Such a project would encounter two sets of difficulties. One is the wide scope of such an undertaking. Just as the history of childhood coincides with that of the human race in point of time, so it tends to do likewise in regard to subject matter. Child life is so inextricably bound up with every other aspect of life that its history would necessarily have to cover much of the range of the human past. The second and quite specific difficulty is the dearth of historical data bearing on childhood. The student of original sources of history finds relatively few references to children, and those he finds are comparatively lacking in quality. The ancients made virtually no records of the life of young children; classic Rome, for example, furnishes almost no data for child study. Legal codes, so fruitful a source of light on many historical topics, have seemed for centuries to recognize children chiefly as channels for the transmission of property. Even medical writings, dealing with problems in which children inevitably occupy a large part, are conspicuous for the relative lack of emphasis they give to children's diseases and the problems of their specific physical welfare.

Although there are wide gaps in our knowledge about the life of children in past ages, there is information on certain specific points that is helpful in our efforts to gain a historical perspective for our modern studies. One such specific topic is the status of childhood, by which is meant the position of children in relation to their parents and the

larger social group of which they are a part. Possibly it is because the question of their status, rather than the children themselves, touched the interests of their elders that relatively more information is available on this subject. Fortunately, it is a topic of outstanding importance to the material in this volume, and to it this chapter is devoted.

#### THE CHILD IN PRIMITIVE SOCIETIES

Children were numerically a larger portion of primitive society than they are today. Studies by Krzywicki<sup>1</sup> tend to show that "amongst primitive peoples who have not been led out of their ancient way of life," children constituted nearly one-half of the population rather than the one-third which prevails in contemporary societies. Both a higher birth rate and a shorter span of adult life accounted for this fact.

#### *The Desire for Children.*

There is every reason to believe that children were desired by primitive folk. The position of women in many groups turned on their ability to have children. The barren woman was despised. The childless husband appeared ridiculous. So fervent was the wish for offspring that it at times eclipsed the fact of legitimacy. To meet the problem of childlessness, the social fiction of adoption was developed as a restorative of the lapsed prestige of parenthood. With the domestication of animals, and as their other duties waned, women became much more important as bearers of valued property. Brides began to be bought. The barren wife was returned to the seller. Marriage became a durable bond for the protection of the young, and adultery was considered as a species of theft.

Children are a practical asset to primitive peoples; their value lies in the contribution they can make to the all-consuming struggle for existence. Besides these more utilitarian considerations, a large family carries with it a sense of dignity, a feeling of prestige, so that vanity reinforces the motive of gain. Supernatural advantages reinforce those of a more material kind, for children often become the caretakers of the parental spirits. Children spell not only comfort in this world but security in the next, and the relative value of boys and girls takes form early as they function in these respective ways to the advantage of their parents.

<sup>1</sup> Ludwik Krzywicki, *Primitive Society and Its Vital Statistics*, Macmillan & Co., Ltd., London, 1934, pp. 243 ff.

From the standpoint of the larger social group, the child assumes importance as the main instrument in the perpetuation of culture. Where there is no written language, it is only through the child that continuity of culture is assured. Then again, primitive society is based on kinship. The blood bond runs like an obsession through these simple forms of social life. It is, one might say, the organizing thread in primitive society. This bond is most obvious in the case of mother and child. It is a relationship easy to grasp, and obviously much was made of it in very early times.

In keeping with the foregoing picture is the fact that primitive elders seem only seldom to resort to corporal punishment of children. Lowie<sup>2</sup> cites some interesting cases. A trader in Samoa was nearly lynched because he whipped his own child. An Australian native beat his wife because she struck their child. Lowie quotes Dr. George B. Grinnell, who studied the Plains Indians for decades, as follows: "Indians never whip their children. . . . Sometimes a mother, irritated by the resistance of a yelling child, will give it an impatient shake by one arm as she drags it along, but I have never witnessed anything in the nature of a punishment of a child by a parent."<sup>3</sup> On the basis of a good deal of evidence, there seems to be a rather direct ratio between the crudeness of culture and gentleness with children, thus suggesting that as culture accumulates and comes to be taken more seriously, the pressure exerted on the child by the parent to compel conformity becomes correspondingly greater.

### *Abortion.*

The picture of primitive childhood, however, is not entirely, or even perhaps largely, one of sweetness and light. Quite different practices, revealing other attitudes, appear constantly in the studies of primitive cultures. Abortion, for example, occurs early and with varying degrees of social acceptance. Many primitive groups looked upon it without disapproval. The Code of Hammurabi and the Mosaic law did not condemn it. The later Judaic law regarded the fetus as merely a part of the mother, without independent existence. One seeks in vain in Egyptian lore for the prohibition of abortion.

<sup>2</sup> Robert H. Lowie, *Are We Civilized?* Harcourt, Brace & Company, Inc., New York, 1929, pp. 167 ff.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 167.

*Infanticide.*

Infanticide, including exposure and abandonment, is common. Studies of primitive cultures are replete with references to it, indicating not only its frequency but also its variety of motivation. We can identify, perhaps, four phases of its development among primitive people. The first phase involves its use as an individual act of self-defense against such dangers as famine or disease. In his earliest stages, primitive man has no population policy, so his reactions to the problem presented by the newly born baby are individual, irregular, and in direct answer to insistent needs. This explains no doubt the intermittent character of infanticide at certain times and places. Somewhat later there appears a second phase, in which the practice becomes habitual, extensive, and standardized—"a keen-bladed knife that trims off the threatened excess of child population." At times as many as half or two-thirds of the children are thus sacrificed. The practice is now regarded with varying degrees of social approval. On the whole, there is not much objection because the infant child in these cultures is not considered as having any status in the group, so there is nothing strange or strained in the parental exercise of discretion in accepting or rejecting him. In the third phase of its development, infanticide becomes selective, with some implications of a eugenic nature. There is the question not simply whether the newborn baby shall be allowed to live or not, but what sort of infant he is. Curious indeed are some of the earliest bases of selection. In addition to the obvious rejection of the physically defective or babies who seem destined to be weak, there are cases where twins, one of twins, or the quieter of twins, were not allowed to live. Finally, in its fourth phase, there crystallizes resentment against infanticide. This seems to arise at about the time when plants and animals are being domesticated, when recognition of the economic value of the male as their domesticator, and of the female as the bearer of such males, makes its appearance. Gradually the mores now come to be reshaped, and the right of rejecting the child at birth, although not necessarily denied, is now confined to the prerogatives of the husband and father.

*Child Spacing.*

Child spacing, now so much emphasized in discussions on birth control, was achieved through the limitation of sexual intercourse be-



tween parents for a given period after the birth of a child. The length of this period might be two years, as long as four years, until the child was weaned or until he was running about. This practice seems to have grown up in the wake of an understanding of paternity; and as experience proved its effectiveness, it became part of the mores of the group, made effective both by ghost fear and by fear of the ridicule of neighboring kin.

It will be helpful to remember throughout this discussion that in earlier cultures the individual family was often a rather unstable unit. Although there is no such institution as "the primitive family," but rather a large variety of diverse forms of family organization, there are many primitive societies which have to rely upon other types of social groups for a permanent form because the husband-wife relationship is too unstable and discontinuous, and in which the biological family is obliterated by a much larger group, so that the child is required to adjust himself to a group of some fifteen or twenty persons.<sup>4</sup>

### *Shortness of Infancy.*

Another of the basic facts in the lives of primitive children is the short period of infancy. Just as the comparative study of animal life shows the shortest period of infancy among the simplest forms, so apparently at the human level the earlier the stage of social development, the shorter the period of infancy. During these years, the life of the child is much like that of young animals. The practices of many groups indicate a concept of young children as a sort of undifferentiated mass of humanity. The aim of the parents during this period is not to train the child, but to cleanse him and purify him of the ghostly influences of his prenatal life. It is significant that the child is not given a name until his seventh or eighth year, for it is then, but then only, that he is believed to assume a separate and distinct individuality.

### *Early Labor of Children.*

The complement to brevity of immaturity is the early labor of children. The child in primitive societies must learn early to do his share of the work. Getting food is a communal effort of the kinship group, and the child is hardly weaned before he takes on his proportionate burdens. These tasks include stirring soup, kneading dough, hulling rice, wash-

<sup>4</sup> Margaret Mead, "The Primitive Family," in *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1931, vol. vi, pp. 65-67.

ing roots, watching cattle, milking the goat, cleaning the cooking utensils, carrying water, and toting the inevitable younger child around. The primitive child, in other words, discovers reality before he has learned to play. The carefree, joyous child seems to be confined to the imagination of poets and the realities of these later days.

The early education of the primitive child contains few ideas of an ordered, purposeful instruction; rather it is a haphazard, uncontrolled, vague sort of training which can be bared in outline no more than can the growth of a puppy. What there is of more formalized instruction seems directed toward the dual purpose of emphasizing the uniqueness of his people and accepting the psychological domination of his elders. It is considered especially important that he develop the proper attitudes and disposition parallel in point of time with his physical and economic maturing. The force of religion supplements the influence of such education. "The whole terrifying threat of the malignancy of the spirit world is let loose upon those who tend to dispute the power and threaten the interests of the predominant sex class, or group. Those who stray from the beaten path of custom become tainted with moral iniquity."<sup>5</sup>

From what has been said, it is clear that the child has but little status in primitive societies. Both the lighter and the more rigorous aspects of the picture point to this conclusion. The absence of corporal punishment, the prevalence of infanticide, and early child labor all agree in their fundamental meaning that the young child is of little or no importance. He must fit into the scheme of primitive life early; he has no rights of his own; his status turns wholly upon the convenience of the group rather than any rights of the child himself. It is the welfare of the group, not of the child, that is the determining factor in his position.

#### THE CHILD IN EARLY CIVILIZATIONS

With social development comes differentiation of social structure, function, and value, all of which have to do with the way in which children are regarded and treated. The minutiae of child life would be quite different, for example, in caste-colored India than among the monotheistic Israelites or the sun-bathing Greeks. We must guard, therefore, against the danger of generalizing too much with facts which

<sup>5</sup> Nathan Miller, *The Child in Primitive Society*, Brentano's, New York, 1928, pp. 33, 34.

of necessity vary a great deal, on the other hand, there are certain similarities in the fundamental outlines of the picture, and it is these which we shall consider briefly here.

Children in the early civilizations of Greece, Rome, India, China, Persia, etc., were customarily welcomed at birth. Generally speaking, they were desired, even if there were limitations to the number that were genuinely welcomed. Thus feeling varied, as to both place and time, on the basis of socioeconomic circumstances, it was greater usually in the case of the birth of a male child. Available glimpses of parent-child relationships in those days, the games children played, the nature of the disciplinary controls customarily employed, indicate that child life had its happy and compensating features. On the other hand, there were darker practices involving children which, both in their direct effects and in their implications, are significant in their bearing upon our central theme, the status of children.

### *Infanticide.*

Infanticide was one of the customary ways in which earlier civilizations limited the number of their children. Only among those peoples for whom the bounties of nature or the existing sparsity of the population necessitated no such limitations does one note its absence. The practice was particularly common with baby girls, as in India and China. Ordinarily such discrimination against females at birth was associated with institutionalized social arrangements which resulted in women having less value in the economic scale, such as a status of relative idleness for women at the higher social levels, the necessity of finding a dowry for a daughter, or the woman leaving her own clan at marriage for that of her husband.

In some of the early civilizations, infanticide was practiced under direction of the state, with conscious eugenic intent, as in ancient Sparta, or among the Romans whose Twelve Tables forbade the rearing of deformed children; or at the discretion of the parents, as among the Athenians. In either event, the practice flourished with legal approval in actual enactments, like those of Lycurgus and Solon or in the ideal legislative proposals of Plato and Aristotle.

### *Abandonment and Exposure.*

The usual method of infanticide was by suffocation or drowning, but these more direct and unequivocal forms gave way early, in many

cases, to abandonment and exposure. This was a definite step forward, since it allowed the possibility, and encouraged the hope, that the infant would not actually die but would be picked up and reared by strangers. This is clearly implied in the fact that infants were exposed so often where they could be seen—and saved: at the entrance to the temples, in the sacred grottoes, the hippodromes, the open highways, in vegetable gardens, on the banks of rivers or the seashore where bathers were wont to congregate. This practice of placing a child in a basket or earthen vessel and leaving it in a temple or some other public and accessible place was known among the Greeks as “potting the child.” In Rome, costly ornaments were often put on the exposed infant in order to induce people to take him.

Particularly frequent are the references to abandonment and exposure in the records of classic Greece. Wherever one finds a Greek colony, says Payne, he finds also the popular tradition of a notable human or a mythical deity who began his history as an exposed infant.<sup>6</sup> In the plays of the fourth century B.C., a favorite theme for comedy, and for tragedy too, was the child who had been exposed and saved, and subsequently found by his parents. Later, Terrence and Plautus exploited this theme for the Romans.

A reading of the religious and literary myths of the classic civilizations indicates that a number of exposed children were saved. Sometimes they were saved by courtesans or wives, who sought, by pretending that these rescued children were their own, to prod the waning ardor of a lover or husband; sometimes they were rescued by slaves or persons of menial status, who saw in them opportunities for future exploitation, such as rearing them as slaves or maiming and blinding them for use in the profession of begging. Not infrequently the tales of the times tell how goats or wolves or some other wild animal suckled and kept alive an exposed child, the purpose of such stories apparently being to make people ashamed that animals, and not they, rescued these children. The story of Romulus and Remus is well known.

Significant in a number of ways are the measures taken against infanticide and its substitutes. Consider the situation in Rome. The first attempt to check the practice came apparently from Romulus, who, bent on the development of a powerful fighting machine, pledged his people to bring up all males except those who were lame or monstrous

<sup>6</sup> George Henry Payne, *The Child in Human Progress*, G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1916, p. 191.

from birth, and at least the first-born female child. More constructive, even if indirect, was the order of Augustus, emperor at the time of Christ, to set aside a reward of 2000 sesterces (about \$40.00) for the person who would rear an orphan. About a century later, 97 A.D., came Nerva's order that assistance be given parents who found themselves without the means of bringing up their children. (By 100 A.D., there were 5000 such cases.) The fourth century witnessed a series of notable advances, possibly under the growing influence of the Christian religion. In 315 A.D., Constantine the Great issued an edict directing magistrates to give immediate and adequate aid to all parents who produced children which they were too poor to rear. An edict of 331 A.D. gave title to those who rescued an exposed child, against any subsequent claims of his parents. In 374, Emperor Valentinian definitely forbade, under stringent punishment, the exposure of infants.

Paralleling these secular measures and reinforcing their effect were the actions taken by the general Councils of the Church. Beginning in the fourth century, and for several centuries thereafter, these Council actions both denounced and ordered ecclesiastical punishments of varying severity for parents who killed or exposed their offspring. At the same time, the Church became active in the establishment of institutions for foundlings, which amounted in a sense to an attack upon the practice through the indirect approach of offering a substitute. The Xanodocheion, or village asylums, ordered by the Council of Nicaea in 325 were the first systematic step in this direction, and the development of a substitute approach to the problem had the sanction of the Church for more than a thousand years. This offer of an asylum for abandoned children was a wise policy on the part of the Church, both because it provided an effective answer to the problem and because it tended to identify the Church with mother love in the minds of many people.

Church and state united in the movement for the protection of children in the laws of Justinian, who, raised to the throne in 527 A.D., published a code of laws which have immortalized his name. Justinian proclaimed absolute liberty for foundling children, declaring that they were the property neither of the parents who exposed them nor of those who rescued them. The enactment of this legislation in the sixth century serves to indicate not only the obvious continuance of the practice, despite earlier decrees against it, but also the unending insistence upon its elimination.

*Child Selling.*

Child selling was another common and widespread custom in the early civilizations. In a sense, it was a substitute for infanticide and exposure. Naturally it came later in the course of history, for obviously its spread was impossible before economic conditions were such as to make children's labor valuable to the purchaser.

The sale of children early attained extensive proportions in the Orient. Both Chinese and Japanese reports bear witness to its prevalence and to efforts to suppress it. In Japan, for example, from 1624 to 1734, no less than eight enactments appeared declaring it a crime punishable by death; yet as late as the famine year of 1905 there are reports of its widespread practice.

In the days of the later Roman Empire, the spectacle of children being sold by the creditors of the parents was a common sight, it being the legal right of a creditor to satisfy his claim at the cost of the liberty of a son or the debauchery of a daughter. Among the Gauls, prior to their domination by the Franks, the heads of families that lacked food or the means to obtain it took their children to the market place and sold them as they would the veriest chattels. This traffic was common, and was carried on publicly in what is now France, Germany, Italy, and England. It was in this way that Saint Bathilde, afterward the wife of King Clovis II, became the slave of the mayor of the palace. The king saw her while she was at work in the mayor's household, and fell in love with her. The traffic attained such proportions in the British Isles that it became the principal object of a missionary expedition by Gregory, who became pope in 590.<sup>7</sup>

Various regulatory measures were passed during the period under consideration. In 391 A.D., Valentinian ordered that a child sold by its father become a free man after a certain period of servitude. In 451, it was decreed that a person who sold a free-born son for the purpose of having that son sold to the barbarians would be fined six ounces of gold. In 500, Theodoric ordered that when a father, because of poverty, was obliged to sell his child, the child was not to lose his liberty. The Justinian Code of 534 contained a provision by which a father whose poverty was extreme was allowed to sell his son or daughter at the moment of birth and to repurchase the child at a later date.

The nature of this legislation and its continuance through the cen-

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 290 ff.

turies clearly indicate that it had at best only partial success. The sale of children occurred in many lands over a period of centuries, and persisted to comparatively recent times. It is the historic background that accounts for the popularity of the oft-used drama of the old homestead, the overdue mortgage, and the villainous mortgage holder who sought to barter his financial rights for the honor of an attractive and virtuous daughter. In modified form, the sale of children to satisfy the debts of their parents occurred in this country during the nineteenth century in the system of redemptioners. This was an arrangement whereby the children of immigrants who were brought here without money to pay for their passage were sold into service, as well as the immigrants themselves, for a number of years to persons who remunerated the carriers who had transported them across the seas.<sup>8</sup>

### *Support of Parents.*

In all the early civilizations, and through the centuries since, children have been regarded by their parents as a form of social insurance, a kind of family old-age pension plan. Children must work for the benefit of their parents, and are to maintain them in their declining years. This motive is not always expressed directly or enjoined in specific commands; rather it is implied and taken for granted. It appears more often between than in the lines. Much of the emphasis upon respect for one's elders, with all its religious sanctions, was interpreted to mean economic support of the elders. It was for this reason, too, that the traditional differences in the values of boys and girls developed: girls left home and were of less value to the families which reared them. It is not mere coincidence that among the Chinese the greater value of the male child, the financial obligations of children to their parents, and the system of ancestor worship attained so high a degree of acceptance.<sup>9</sup>

The compact family life, the strong sense of family responsibility, the emphasis upon the economic duties of the younger toward the elder members all emerged from the larger socioeconomic situation. The struggle for existence was hard and uncertain, social welfare services and public treasuries were not as available as today, the health of

<sup>8</sup> A. B. Faust, *The German Element in the United States*, The Steuben Society of America, New York, 1927.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Pearl Buck, *The Good Earth*, John Day Co., Inc., New York, 1931; E. A. Ross, *The Changing Chinese*, D. Appleton-Century Company, Inc., New York, 1911.

middle-aged and older people was different from that of these groups today. The responsibility for the elders had to be carried by their young.

### *Parental Rights in Early Civilizations.*

The paradox of happy child life and parent-child relationships on the one hand, and of infanticide or exposure or child sale on the other, which have just been outlined, can be resolved into proper perspective if we think in terms of the basic status of childhood. In these earlier and older civilizations, children had little if any status as a separate age group in the population. Of affection between children and parents, of happy compensations in their daily lives, there was no doubt a great deal; but in the sense of having rights and privileges which were their distinctive own, there was no such thing. The child had few or no rights, *per se*. Not only under the Roman law, but in the old Persian, Egyptian, Greek, and Gallic legal codes, a father was given absolute power over his children. "While, generally speaking, fathers loved their children and did not desire to kill them or sell them or rule them in an arbitrary or selfish way, they had the right to do so and the state enforced this right instead of interceding in behalf of the child."<sup>10</sup>

Particularly striking were the rights of the Roman father. His relation with his child was known as the *patria potestas*; and nowhere else, in a highly developed society, does one find anything just like it. It gave the father the right to reject his children: he could sell them, he could disinherit them, he could select their wives and husbands, he could mutilate them and put them to death. This absolute right did not end when the child reached his majority; it ceased only at death or if the father lost his right of Roman citizenship. "In the forum, the senate or the camp, the adult son of a Roman citizen enjoyed the public and private rights of a person; in his father's house, he was a mere thing, confounded by the laws with the moveables, the cattle, and the slaves, whom the capricious master might alienate or destroy without being responsible to any earthly tribunal. . . . Neither age, nor rank, nor the consular office, nor the honors of a triumph, could exempt the most illustrious citizen from the bonds of filial subjection."<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Abbott, Grace, *The Child and the State*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1938, vol. i. p. 3.

<sup>11</sup> Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1898, vol. iv, pp. 473-474.



## THE CHILD IN MEDIEVAL EUROPE

The Middle Ages constitute an intriguing period in human history. On the ruins of the greatest nation and the highest civilization that the world had known, there was imposed the crude culture of the invading barbarian. For a thousand years civilization seemed to be stagnant. First deterioration, then its continuity, and ultimately its standardization in feudal society, stand out. Yet always there were hidden influences working imperceptibly to happier ends, resulting ultimately in the rebirth of civilization that is commonly called the Renaissance.

There is an extensive and imposing literature on the history of this period, with full accounts not only of political and national affairs, but also of the daily life of the people and the institutional forces that operated within the social structure. But one turns the pages of this literature endlessly and all but fruitlessly to find any information bearing upon the status of children. The omission is eloquent in its meaning.

The medieval pattern of childhood was the product of three sets of ideas and practices. First was the one that had existed in the Roman world, just referred to as the highest civilization in the world up to that time. In the pages immediately preceding, the child's status among the Romans was indicated. Second were the practices of the lusty Germanic invaders. Of them, Tacitus writes as follows: "In every house you see the little boys, the sons of lords and peasants, equally sordid and ill-clothed, lying and playing promiscuously together on the ground and among the cattle, without any visible distinction. In this manner they grow up to that prodigious strength which we behold with admiration."<sup>12</sup> A healthy and disdainful disregard of children seems characteristic of these lusty ancestors of ours. The inhabitants of the northern part of Britain, prior to the introduction of Christianity, did not give their sons names until after they had performed some brave deed or given some indication of their disposition and character; this is reminiscent of similar practices among primitive folk. The youth of Germany, Gaul, and Britain, according to Caesar, received scant attention until they approached the manly age, for when a son was younger it was held shameful for his father to be seen in his company.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Quoted from Oscar Chrisman, *The Historical Child*, Richard G. Badger, Boston, 1920, p. 288.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 288.

The third source of the medieval pattern of childhood undoubtedly is to be found in the influence of Christianity. These influences were strangely mixed. The early church fathers valued the ascetic life so strongly as to create almost an antagonism to married life. This, together with the lowered status accorded to women (despite the veneration of the Virgin) could not but have a marked influence upon family life and the status of the child. Children are seldom mentioned in the Christian writings of the second and third centuries, and almost nothing is said about their training. On the other hand, Christianity, from the first, condemned the practice of infanticide and denounced it as murder, thus becoming a powerful force for the protection of child life, of female children in particular. Out of this emphasis, and the general insecurity and poverty of the time, emerged the historic child policy of "easy come and easy go"—that is to say, a policy which insists upon natural and unlimited reproduction, accompanied by an excessively high child mortality.

Childhood in the Middle Ages was short. Betrothal and marriage took place at an early age, for boys customarily at fourteen and for girls at twelve. These ages, however, were often disregarded, children being married when even younger. Such matters were arranged by elders, and usually at their, not the children's, convenience. Another reason for the shortness of childhood was the early age at which people were put to work. An early marriage and an early age for work go hand in hand. Such early labor usually took the form of apprenticeship. The people of the Middle Ages accepted the fact that every child should be trained to do something. Boys of the upper classes were sent into the homes of nobles to serve a number of years in order to acquire the use of arms and become learned in the art of chivalry. Boys of the common classes were placed out under a master to spend several years in learning a trade or to carry on agriculture. Children of the very poor were put to work at a particularly early age, and their plight was often very pitiful. Orphans had the hardest lot of all; for if parents treated their own children as has been indicated above, it is obvious that they treated other people's even worse. The basic principle in the work and training of young people in the Middle Ages was embodied in the apprentice system. This principle took legal form as time went on; and by the sixteenth century, in England for example, the law required every child to receive such training as would fit him for business, a trade, or agriculture. Only the parents who could prove that they were able to

maintain their children if they did not work were exempt from this requirement.

One hesitates to generalize upon so intangible a matter, but there is much reason to believe that there was less affection between parent and child during the Middle Ages than we today take for granted as a normal condition. Part of the evidence leading to this conclusion is gained from bits of information about parent-child relationships; much of it is based on inferences from certain existing practices which show that children left home at such early ages that relatively little affection had an opportunity to develop. Children who were sent to boarding school spent the entire year there, save for a few holidays. There was the custom of boarding children out or sending them out to be servants or persons-in-waiting. There were the away-from-home implications of the apprenticeship system, already referred to. Finally, we cannot but speculate upon the extent of remarriage among the people of the Middle Ages, because of the high mortality rate among adults as well as other age groups.

Children were brought up with relative strictness during the Middle Ages. It was the theory of the time that every child needed corrective discipline which was both frequent and severe. Offenses of a rather minor character were often punished with marked severity. When knighthood was in flower, the youthful aspirant to chivalry was soundly thrashed for evidences of disobedience. Young noblemen, princes, and even kings were beaten, brutally at times, by their tutors. Henry IV of France expressly ordered his son's governess to whip the prince, since "there was nothing in the world more profitable for him." He who was crowned king of France in 1610, at the age of nine years, had the following experiences, as evidenced in diaries relating to him:

October 9, 1603. Woke up about 8 o'clock. He was stubborn and was flogged for the first time. [He was born September 27th, 1601.]

March 4th, 1604. At eleven o'clock, he wishes to dine. When the dinner was brought in, he had it taken out again, then brought back. Troublesome, severely whipped.

May 14th, 1610. He was proclaimed king, went to Parliament, and received a delegation. For sundry offenses after his coronation, he was whipped. He reflects: "I would rather do without so much obeisance and honor, if they wouldn't have me whipped."<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Taken from Lowie, *op. cit.*, pp. 138-139.

## THE ENGLISH CHILD IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

As every student of history knows, the eighteenth century was a period of tremendous upheaval and change which was particularly conspicuous in France and Great Britain. In France, these changes were most noteworthy in the realms of philosophy and politics, culminating in the French Revolution; in Great Britain, in the life and labor of the people, incidental to the development of the Industrial Revolution. It seems pertinent, therefore, to continue with a brief survey of child life in England in the eighteenth century, both because the changes in the life of the people were most pronounced in England, and also because of the more specific relationship of the English situation to that in the United States, with which we shall deal in the following chapter. In England in the latter half of the eighteenth century, the Industrial Revolution and the system of enclosures which was a forerunner to it brought poverty and misery to a great many people, and much wealth to a relative few. Any characterization of child life during this period must differentiate, then, between these two aspects of the picture.

For those elements who were on the upgrade, socially and economically, the century witnessed the appearance of new ideas in regard to social questions in general, and the problems of education and child status in particular. People began, says Mrs. Bayne-Powell, to take some interest in educational theories, to treat their offspring with less barbarity. A new spirit of humanity was creeping in. Parents were almost beginning to consider their children as of the same flesh and blood as themselves. Calvinism, with its theory of infant damnation and inherent juvenile depravity, was losing its hold. Complaints of indulgent parents multiplied. The old forms of address—"Sir" and "madam"—yielded to "papa" and "mamma." Portraits of children were painted, some at considerable cost. The lack of discipline within the home was bemoaned. Toward the end of the century a more serious spirit was manifest. Fathers and mothers, although still talking at length about the duty of children to their parents, had some idea also of the duty of parents to their children.<sup>15</sup>

These new ideas are brought into bold relief by the grimness of

<sup>15</sup> Rosamond Bayne-Powell, *The English Child in the Eighteenth Century*, E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., New York, 1939, chap. 1.

much of the old which still prevailed, even among the wealthier classes. Cruelty still existed, notably in the schools and among the rough and ignorant. Many parents were stern and harsh. Mary Wollstonecraft's father used to flog his daughters regularly for no apparent reason except to satisfy his own whim. There is the story of a mother who always whipped her little boy when he fell downstairs. Susanna Wesley taught her babies of a year old and younger to fear the rod and cry softly. Many children wore iron collars round their neck, with backboards strapped over their shoulders. Families were large, unusually so; and the very abundance of children kept parents from regarding them individually or even looking upon their death with aught but equanimity. Boys and girls entered adult life very early. The introduction of girls to society, the termination of school training for boys, and marriage all occurred at an early age. On the whole, childhood was regarded as a tiresome stage which it was hoped would pass quickly and painlessly.

Naturally, for the great mass of the population, the penetration of new and softening ideas was slight, and the widespread poverty attending the revolutionizing changes of the era bore heavily upon the younger members of society. If childhood was short among the upper classes, it was doubly so among those less fortunately situated. Children went to work at a tender age. Defoe was delighted to find in the Taunton neighborhood that "there was not a child in the town or villages round it of above five years old, but, if it was not neglected by its parents, and untaught, could earn its bread."<sup>16</sup> Long before the Industrial Revolution young children were working in mill and mine, and its advent gave new impetus and opportunities to the extension of the practice. Industry was almost entirely unregulated during the century under consideration, and there developed those abuses—whereby, for example, very young persons worked for fourteen and sixteen hours a day—which are well known to all students of the history of the modern industrial system and which led to the nineteenth-century movement for regulation of hours and conditions of labor.

The apprentice system continued to operate on a large scale. Children could be apprenticed at the age of eight. In some instances, this system fulfilled its theory of a training process for the young; in others it was only a subterfuge for exploitation. Many persons took ap-

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32.

prentices, but for the purpose of securing cheap and stable labor. There were many complaints about "these weary years of service." Virtually the only safeguard under the system was the fact that an apprentice could apply to the justices if he were starved or ill used, and, if convinced, the justice could order that his indenture be canceled. As a practical matter, such an application, while feasible in the rural areas, was scarcely effective in the towns, where justices were not only "harder-faced" as a rule, but also not so accessible or so likely to be known to an aggrieved apprentice.

Young children, particularly boys, were utilized extensively during the summer months to scare the birds from arable fields by running back and forth with a wooden clapper and making a noise. There were also sheep and cows to be watched in the open meadows. Such duties, while not arduous, were apt to be monotonous and to extend over long hours.

Where's the little boy that looks after the sheep?  
He's under the haycock, fast asleep.

Certain specific groups of children had a particularly unfortunate status. One such group were the chimney sweeps. These boys, stolen in many instances from their parents or inveigled out of workhouses, were driven by beatings and torture to climb chimneys and do work which left them bruised and injured; they were kept destitute of instruction and moral teachings, and were in general as harshly treated as any children of the time. Charles Kingsley wisely selected his hero for *The Water Babies*. An official report on their plight was presented to Parliament in 1917. Another particularly unfortunate group were the pauper children who were despatched in truck loads to work in the new factories in the North and Midlands. "Probably no page in English history," says Mrs. Bayne-Powell, "fills the reader with greater horror and pity than that on which is described the misery of these helpless children."<sup>17</sup>

The legal status of children constitutes a tangible measure for the purposes of our study. The law of the eighteenth century dealt reversely with children. They were imprisoned and hanged, for example, for offenses with which probation officers now deal. Thus children from six to fourteen years of age were hung for theft and for other less serious offenses. To have their helpless children convicted of a capital

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.

crime was for some parents a convenient way of ridding themselves of unwanted children. There are the all too numerous cases in which thieves and prostitutes "adopted" children to aid them in their business or hired them out to beggars. References are not infrequent, in the eighteenth as in preceding centuries, to the mutilation of the children used for begging, so as to increase their pity-inciting appeal. The penalty for such mutilation, in an age which hung offenders for theft, is highly relevant. In 1761, the Court of Hick's Hall committed Anne Martin, alias Chapbury, to Newgate. Convicted of putting out the eyes of children with whom she went begging about the country, she was sentenced to two years imprisonment! Other children languished in jail because their parents were confined there for non-payment of debts. Large numbers were sent to America, as students of our early history well know.

There were, to be sure, bright spots in the child life of the eighteenth century. In a predominantly rural country, children had the liberty of ranging gardens and fields. Such a setting, with the inevitable large families, made possible the enjoyment of simple pleasures, and for many poor children these sufficed. In addition, however, there were a surprising number of other recreational facilities. The drama became exceedingly popular during the century, and the more careless parents might permit their children to accompany them to the theater. Puppet shows became prevalent during these years. A dictionary published in 1719 mentions the magic lantern. Fireworks, which have always delighted childish minds, were popular during the century. The country fair was an outstanding event for both young and old. Many of the children's games known to us were played by eighteenth-century children: blindman's buff, hide-and-seek (called hoop and hide), see-saw (known as Tettertrotter), prisoner's base, cricket, hockey, and football. The rocking horse was brought to England from France during the century, and the music boxes and dolls which delighted children in those years are of interest to us yet.

Despite these lighter aspects, the status of child life in England in the eighteenth century was but little higher than it had been for centuries. "If an age is to be judged by its treatment of the weak and helpless, the eighteenth century merits our condemnation. It must be remembered, however, that those horrible cruelties were nothing new. They had unhappily been going on all through the centuries; the new

thing was that people were beginning to take notice of them and to ask each other whether they could not and should not be prevented. The nascent humanitarianism of the eighteenth century produced the great reforms of the nineteenth."<sup>18</sup>

#### FACTORS IN THE HISTORY OF CHILD STATUS

In the preceding pages of this chapter an effort was made to present a series of slides, as it were, from the history of childhood. These pictures vary considerably in their detail, but they agree in their basic implication that the child, through the long centuries of man's upward climb, was per se of little importance. The remainder of this chapter is devoted to an effort to generalize the factors which through the centuries have determined the status of childhood.

Detailed references to children and to adult practices relating to them contain much, both in overt phrase and by implication, that clarifies the motives which have operated in parent-child and society-child relationships over the centuries. When this material is brought together and reduced to its essential substance, four factors seem to emerge as the basic determinants of the status of childhood. They are: (1) the arithmetic of reproduction; (2) the prevailing economic situation, i.e., what people can afford economically; (3) the ideological factor, i.e., what people have been taught to believe; and (4) the familial factor, i.e., the form and status of family life.

#### *The Arithmetic of Reproduction.*

The term arithmetic of reproduction is used here to include the birth rate, the death rate, and the change in population resulting from the relation of these two rates to each other. The population data available through the centuries of human history show that for the most part, in most countries and for the great mass of people, the combination has been a high birth rate, a high death rate, and a slow rate of population growth, if there was any growth at all. These are commonplace facts to population students, but little attention has been given to their bearing on the welfare of children. The proposition advanced here is that they constitute a fundamental factor in determining the status of childhood.

The mathematics of population has meaning for the individual, and

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44.



in many ways. Pearl Buck has written recently of one aspect of it. "In all those countries," she says, "where population is too abundant, the cause of the individual is lost. Democracy is impossible in an overpopulated country. One needs only to read history with this in mind to discover how inevitably as population increases the form of government changes from any semblance of democracy into some form of despotism."<sup>19</sup>

This is much the same thought as is implied here in regard to the significance of a high birth rate and a high infant and general mortality rate. They constitute the "easy come-easy go" method of reproduction. Life—infant life, child life—is cheap. Many children are born, many do not survive. Families are large, and the turnover within them is tremendous. It is the natural characteristic way of growth and reproduction in all forms of animal life.

The essential point to be recognized is this, that while the process of reproduction may be natural, its arithmetic is wasteful and its effect is a low value rating for the individual infant life. This individual fact, multiplied many times, dictates the relative status of infant and child life. Where the value of the individual unit is low, no group mores and programs based on a high status of child life are possible. As a social element in the population, children have little status because the individual child has little value.

Moreover, these effects are reinforced by the arithmetic of parenthood. Life for adults was considerably less certain in earlier centuries than it is today. The turnover among them was tremendous. The adult death rate was high. In particular, the birth of many children per family exacted a heavy toll from the mothers. Stepparents in earlier centuries were far more common than they now are. This affected parent-child relationships, for it meant that they could not be as individual or as stable as they are among us today. In other words, large families, a high turnover among parents and children, and short periods of infancy, all characteristic of earlier centuries, combined to these ends—shorter, less stable, less meaningful relationships between successive generations. Stated another way, the present high status of childhood was not possible until a more economical rate of reproduction and the small-family system came generally to prevail.

<sup>19</sup> Pearl Buck, "Pearl Buck Writes on Birth Control," *Birth Control Review*, November, 1939, pp. 3-4.

*The Economic Factor.*

A second and obvious factor in determining the status of childhood is the economic one, i.e., what people can afford. Tersely put, the argument advanced is that the status of the child depends historically upon the aid he gives in the struggle for existence.

The contemporary American, with his high plane of living, finds it difficult to remain aware of the fact that for endless long centuries man was preoccupied wholly or largely with the stark struggle for existence. In this struggle, the society that was able to exist was the one that sacrificed the individual for the group. This fact is revealed clearly by the work of all students of societal history. In the early stages of human society, people were forced to function in rather compact groups. Kinship, real or fictitious, was the bond which held individuals together. The relation of the individual to his group was all or nothing. Individual capacity was used to the advantage of all the members of the group; but if it was considered a serious handicap to the group, it was eliminated, often with blunt ruthlessness. Only by group solidarity and mutual aid could survival be made possible in the conflict with unconquered nature and hostile groups.

In this struggle, the child naturally was low in the scale of value; and when a choice had to be made, he and not the able-bodied adult was selected for elimination or exploitation. In the simpler stages of societal development, the problems of existence were immediate and the answers invariably were direct. A child was born, there was no room or food for him, so the parents snuffed out his life. At first, here and there, this was a personal, individual reaction. Repeated and continued, it became a social observance, and the practice of infanticide was established. The extent of its use, the degree of its social acceptance, the forms which it took, and the substitutes which arose vary in place and with time, but all the students of it emphasize poverty as its basic, precipitating factor.<sup>20</sup> It is for this reason that infanticide and its harsh accompaniments are found extensively in countries like China and Japan when they reach a stage of marked populousness. The Greeks constantly emphasized this idea. "Why do you expose your child?" a Greek father was asked. "Because," he replied, "I love the children I have." Roman legislation against infanticide and its sub-

<sup>20</sup> Edward Westermarck, *The Origin and Development of Moral Ideas*, Macmillan & Co., Ltd., London, 1906; Chrisman, *op. cit.*; Miller, *op. cit.*

stitutes clearly showed economic pressure as the chief causal factor. It is interesting to note, in passing, that some of the later emperors, in their awareness of this fact, attempted to strike at the problem by measures that were aimed at improving the condition of the parents.

What has been said about the relation of economic pressure to infanticide is equally true in regard to other practices which signify the status of childhood, or the lack of it. The heavy hand of economic want or scarcity lay heavy upon the heads of children through the ages. Parents loved their children, they indulged them when and as they could; but the institutionalized arrangements which determined the scope and scale of childhood were fixed by economic limits that were basic and distinct. It was and is not until the culture has reached the stage where economic surplus, or capital, is created that, first, individual parents in considerable numbers and, then, the social pattern are freed from the necessity of realizing present personal material gain from the child; only then can the parent and society afford to allow the child to devote himself to the development of his own individuality apart from parental demands.

### *The Ideological Factor.*

Against the dictates of necessity growing out of the economic factor is that deep and mystic bond which binds parent and child. Whatever form of neural hypothesis one supports concerning what is psychically inborn—whether parental affection is an instinct or an acquired emotional habit—the fact remains that it is real, deep-seated, and widespread. How then, we may ask, was it possible for many of the historic forms of child treatment to develop? Why did sheer mother love not suffice to safeguard the child during the centuries, even in the face of economic pressure?

The answer to these questions is to be found in the history of the social process of innumerable social groups, and it is this: The leaders in society invented plausible excuses to justify such practices because they considered it necessary to maintain them for other reasons. This is one of the functions of leadership: to take action which is necessary for some effective but not appealing reason, and to justify it in terms that are effective and in forms that are socially acceptable.

Consider infanticide. Direct want dictates its use in individual cases. As time goes on, it becomes customary. But mother love in many cases struggles against the custom. Social leadership, which accepts its

necessity, must find—invent if you will—acceptable justification. There is recourse to many subterfuges. What more effective answer to mother love than fear of the gods? "Mother, the gods have need of your child. You must sacrifice him. If you do not, they will be angry, and they will visit their wrath upon all of us." Such an argument served a triple purpose: It offered the strongest kind of counteracting influence, it gave supernatural sanction, and it socialized the practice by making the entire group interested in its acceptance.

To the student of cultural history it is obvious that the various social and parental practices involving children, considered in the preceding sections, arose as scattered individual reactions to urgent and immediate needs, and that as these "answers" proved acceptable and effective they became general and customary. Thus arose the folkways of child care. As time goes on, these folkways are examined, challenged, criticized, and defended. Social leadership, convinced of their value, is intent upon their maintenance. Searching for support, the leaders develop justifying ideologies. A powerful ideology is the religious one. Throughout history, supernatural sanction has been constantly brought to bear in order to bolster up the folkways that have grown up. The whole terrifying threat of the malignancy of the spirit world is let loose upon those who tend to dispute the power and to threaten the interests of the predominant sex, class, or group. Those who stray from the beaten path of custom become tainted with moral iniquity.<sup>21</sup>

Although religious ideology has been used for purposes of concrete presentation, the idea advanced is this: What people have been taught to believe about children is the third basic factor in determining child status. Whether this factor is primary in character and original in time, or whether it is secondary, reinforcing, and rationalizing, is after all of minor importance, once it has developed and found social acceptance.

The role of Christianity in the history of childhood offers an excellent example of what has just been said. Here was a new religion, arising in one of the least important provinces of the Roman Empire and started by a poor Jewish carpenter, which in three centuries pushed its doctrines to the end of the vast imperial domain and even conquered the imperial throne. Its teachings, which were steadfastly held up to cultured Roman and uncouth barbarian, had implications for children, and in time changed many practices in regard to their treatment.

Jesus, the founder of this new religion, considered children an

<sup>21</sup> Miller, *op. cit.*, pp. 33–34.

integral part of society. "Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven." Among the most stirring passages in the recorded words of Jesus are His references to children. His attitude toward them was one of the many revolutions which His religion involved. The fathers of the early church were so much given to praise of the ascetic life as to appear almost antagonistic to marriage, and it is true that during the first century or two there were few references to children. From the beginning, however, certain general consequences of the new religion had significance for children. Its teachings had a liberalizing and softening effect, concretely in regard to legislation and generally in the new understanding of human problems it gave.

The first specific way in which Christianity affected the treatment of children was in its successful fight against infanticide and exposure, which from the beginning it denounced as murder. The attack on these practices was based on the idea that every human being has a soul. This means that children had souls; and if this was true, then infanticide and exposure were murder. The Christian Church won its first fight for children when it convinced the Roman world that they have souls.

But the old incentives for these practices remained, and the church had to grapple with the problem in ways other than ideological. One of these ways was to accept the responsibility for many parentless children. It became the custom, early in church history, for mothers who felt that they were unable to rear their children to confide them to the church. By the door of many church buildings were placed marble receptacles in which mothers left the children they were forced to give up. Not only did this save many individual children, but its psychological implications were tremendous in that it identified the church with mother love.

Institutions for children flourished within the folds of the medieval church. The first one to take care of helpless children, a hospital for foundling children, was established by Daltheus, Archbishop of Milan, in 787. Many similar institutions developed during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. In the eleventh century, a monastic order was founded for the care of poor and abandoned children. Many institutions of the medieval church cared for children as an adjunct to their other work.

Against this brighter side is the fact that some of the doctrines de-

veloped in the name of the Christian Church had seriously handicapping effects upon children. One was the doctrine of child depravity. The child had a soul, but this soul was stained because of its origin. "By their carnal conception and nativity, they come into the world, steeped in sin and guilt, the heirs of hell." For centuries this gloomy declaration was considered a mere truism. It is easy, of course, to brush it tolerantly aside today as a mere theological theory, but the fact is that it colored practice and led to many forms of ill treatment of children. The puritanical trait of abnormal sternness and repression, which interpreted simple childish mischievousness as the work of the devil, as directly descended from the honest belief in the utter depravity of human nature. What people believe about children, we repeat, is a determining factor in the status they accord to children.

### *The Familial Factor.*

The familial factor is the final one which may be said to have basic significance in determining the status of childhood, and the two aspects of the family that are of outstanding importance in this connection are the structure or form of its organization, and the relative importance accorded to it as a social institution. The family is, of course, not an independent social institution capable of being fashioned as one wills. It is part and parcel of the organic life of society. From this it follows that the family's role as a determinant of child status is not separate and distinct from other factors; it may be difficult to say which is the result of the influence of the family and which the result, let us say, of the economic factor. On the other hand, the family is the social vehicle through which the child customarily finds and makes his earlier way in the world; hence it seems obvious that what the family is and is not at any time and place in the history of a social group will have great meaning for the life and status of its children.

With reference to the form of the family, what all its historians have emphasized is the superiority of the monogamous type. The monogamous family has come to be the prevailing form because of its superiority over other historic competing forms. One of the bases of its superiority through the centuries of human experience is its high survival value. It is the best form of family life for children and the survival of child life. Polygyny, a competing form, is weak in its effect upon children. The care of the child tends, under this form, to rest more upon the mother. There is less biparental rearing of children.

In addition to the form, there is the relative importance of the family as a social institution. Among some peoples, the home and the family are of great significance, almost dwarfing at time other social institutions such as the state or the church. The family is the center of life and the outstanding vehicle for the transmission of the culture and values of the societal group. Because of this, the relationship between successive generations is closer and continues over a longer period of time than would otherwise obtain. On the other hand, there are and have been cultures in which the family seems of relatively minor importance. In ancient Sparta, for example, the state and not the family was considered paramount. In the Persia of classic times, the child remained with his mother until his fifth year; the father never saw him until then. At the end of this period, the boy left his mother and went under the care of the state to begin his physical training. But in China, through the centuries, the family has been of great importance and parental authority is strong, as a result of ancestor worship and the constant stress upon filial duty and piety. It is variations like these, in the relative position as well as the structure of family life, that have great basic meaning for the student of child problems.

#### SUMMARY

1. The history of childhood presents special difficulties to the student, first because it is so inevitably bound up with every other aspect of life, and second, because of the relative dearth of historical data on childhood. This is in itself an index of the past status of children.

2. Children constituted a relatively large population element in primitive society. Although they were desired, abortion, infanticide, child spacing, short infancy, and early labor were common in the primitive cultures of the past.

3. Certain changes in the status of children can be noted in the civilizations of classic antiquity. Infanticide often softened into abandonment and exposure, child selling developed as a substitute for both, and emphasis on the duty of children to support their parents became common. However, there remained the sweeping and arbitrary rights of parents to use their child in whatever way was to their advantage.

4. The status of the medieval child was the product of a blending of Roman, German, and Christian influences. Childhood was short, rigorous work came early in life, and child rearing was coldly severe and harsh, even at the level of royalty.

5. Newer attitudes toward children appeared in England during the eighteenth century. Despite the retention of historic practices, parents began to show some conception of their duties to their children. Such changes, however, were limited in extent and scope.

6. Reviewing the general history of childhood, we see four factors as the basic determinants in its status: (a) the arithmetic of reproduction; (b) the prevailing economic situation; (c) the ideological factor; and (d) the familial factor.



# The Changing Status of Childhood in the United States

## THE EARLY AMERICAN REPRODUCTION OF THE EUROPEAN PATTERN OF CHILD STATUS

More than three hundred years ago, the United States began its history with scattered settlements of adventurous or disgruntled Europeans, chiefly English. The culture they established here did not arise *de novo*; it was the culture that prevailed in the Europe from which they came. And yet it was not, and could not be, exactly the same. The early settlers were mostly dissenters, which meant that they would make changes when opportunity afforded. In addition, they transplanted their culture to a new world, which meant that although the broad outlines and the general features of the European culture would be established here, there would be variations in the picture in adjusting to the new scene. Although much emphasis is given in popular thought to the seventeenth-century pioneers, the migration to colonial America was particularly heavy during the latter part of the seventeenth and the first half of the eighteenth centuries. These new and large-scale

infusions tended to act, therefore, as a constant factor for the retention of the Old World ways and values.

What has just been said was true regarding the treatment of children, as it was about other aspects of life. Beginning with the same basic concepts of child status which obtained in the England and Europe from which the settlers of America came, the detailed expression of these basic concepts took form in terms of the minutiae of colonial American life. This is what is meant by the early American reproduction of the European pattern of child status.

#### SELECTED ASPECTS OF COLONIAL CHILD LIFE

Colonial childhood is largely hidden in obscurity. "We know little," writes Mrs. Earle in her delightful volume on colonial child life, "of the childhood days of our forebears, and have scant opportunity to make comparisons or note progress. The child of colonial days was emphatically 'to be seen, not to be heard,'—nor was he even to be much in evidence to the eye. He was of as little importance in domestic, social, or ethical relations as his childish successor is of great importance today; it was deemed neither courteous, decorous, nor wise to make him appear of value or note in his own eyes, or in the eyes of his seniors. Hence there was none of that exhaustive study of the motives, thoughts, and acts of a child which is now so rife."<sup>1</sup> Scattered bits of evidence, however, are available, and they have been gathered together by social historians.<sup>2</sup> On the basis of their works, we are able to piece together the general outlines of the picture of child status. This picture is most clearly revealed in New England, first, because the forefathers there left comments and records to a greater extent than elsewhere, and second, because the greater homogeneity of the population made for a more distinct cultural pattern. It is estimated that at the opening of the Revolutionary War, 98 per cent of the people of New England were English or unmixed descendants of the English. Nowhere else in the American colonies was there so homogeneous a population, or one

<sup>1</sup> Alice Morse Earle, *Child Life in Colonial Days*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1899, p. vii.

<sup>2</sup> Particularly interesting and valuable in this connection are the works of Mrs. Earle and Dr. Calhoun. In addition to her *Child Life in Colonial Days*, Mrs. Earle has written *Home Life in Colonial Days* (The Macmillan Company, New York, 1898), *Colonial Days in Old New York and Customs and Fashions in Old New England*, the latter two published by Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, in 1896 and 1893 respectively. Dr. Arthur W. Calhoun's monumental three-volume work, *A Social History of the American Family* (Arthur H. Clark Company, Cleveland, 1919), is invaluable in this connection.

of such uniformly high quality. Stoughton, the lieutenant governor of Massachusetts (1692-1701) said: "God sifted a whole nation, that he might send choice grain over into the wilderness."<sup>8</sup> In turning, then, to a brief account of selected aspects of colonial child life, as we do at this point, we shall tell the story principally in terms of New England, but with comparisons with and references to circumstances in other sections of colonial America.

1. In pioneer days, when many forms of social organization have not yet reached a high state of development, the home and the family naturally are of great importance. Marriage occurred at an early age—for men more often under twenty than over; for girls, customarily at sixteen, often even younger. A man or woman without family ties was almost unthinkable. In case of the death of a husband or wife, re-marriage was prompt.

2. The patriarchal form of family prevailed in colonial days. It was, speaking generally, a property-holding institution. In most parts of the colonies it was dominated by middle-class standards. It and the church were the two chief agencies of social control, and the family, in addition to being such an agency in its own right, was also important as the nursery of the church. It had, above all things, to be protected. "Ruin families and you ruin all."

3. Filled with Biblical traditions, there was in these families a cultivated desire for abundant posterity. Large ones were the rule. Families of ten or twelve were quite common; twenty or twenty-five children in one family were not rare enough to occasion comment. Sir William Phips was one of twenty-six children, all with the same mother. Green, a Boston printer, had thirty children; Benjamin Franklin, another printer, came from a Boston family of seventeen. The Reverend Samuel Willard, the first minister of Groton, Massachusetts, had twenty children and was himself one of seventeen; the Reverend John Sherman, of Watertown, Massachusetts, had twenty-six children by two wives; the Reverend Moses Fiske had sixteen; and the Reverend Abigail Weld, of Attleboro, Massachusetts, with an annual salary of \$220, had fifteen children, reared a grandchild, lived with generous hospitality, and contributed to the needs of the poor. Special mention must be made of Mrs. Sara Thayer, whose death in 1751 led to the following poetic celebration of her fecund importance:

<sup>8</sup> Reuben G. Thwaites, *The Colonies, 1492-1750*, Longmans, Green & Company, Inc., New York, 1890, p. 181.

Also she was a fruitful vine,  
The truth I may relate,—  
Fourteen was of her body born  
And lived to man's estate.

From these did spring a numerous race,  
One hundred thirty-two;  
Sixty and six each sex alike,  
So I declare to you.

Nor must it be supposed that families of this size were limited to New England. The situation was similar in the other colonies. Patrick Henry was one of nineteen children, and John Marshall was the first of fifteen; family magnitude in Maryland is shown by this revealing sentence: "Manor houses with outstretched wings were built to gather under their sheltering roofs the dozen or more little ones who usually came to break the stillness of the quiet days in that far-off time when there was more of maternity than nervous energy in the world."<sup>4</sup> Complementing this numerous progeny and further increasing the size of the family was the presence of relatives. Since women had few economic opportunities unless they were attached to some family, the typical family included several adult unmarried women—unpaid servants of their kindred.

4. As one would expect, maternal mortality in colonial America was high. Many women died exhausted by maternity and labor, to be succeeded by another and younger wife who carried on the torch of fecundity. Most of the large families of earlier times were the offspring of at least two wives, and marriages three and four deep were no rarity. We might be tempted to think of these marrying colonial husbands as a species of chronological Mormons.

5. Like maternal mortality, infant mortality was excessively high. Here, for example, is a portion of an early American family history that tells a story in itself:

In memory of  
Mary the Daughter of John  
and Effie Lewis who died 9th Nov. 1771  
aged 4 years also  
Seven children of Jno and Elizth Lewis

|                   |                 |           |
|-------------------|-----------------|-----------|
| John Richard died | 2d July 1787    | aged 2 mo |
| Elizabeth         | 16th April 1789 | 11 —      |
| Richard           | 25th Feb 1791   | 7 —       |

Quoted from Calhoun, *op. cit.*, vol. i, p. 286.

|       |                 |       |
|-------|-----------------|-------|
| John  | 17th April 1795 | 1 yr  |
| Eliza | 24th July 1797  | 8 mo  |
| Eliza | 28th July 1800  | 3 —   |
| Jessy | 3rd April 1805  | 4 yrs |

Cases like these were not unusual. Of Cotton Mather's fifteen children, only two survived him; of Judge Sewall's fourteen, only three survived.

There were obvious reasons for this high mortality rate among infants and young children. To begin with, for many years child rearing presented special difficulties in the New World. The climate was different from the historic habitat of the race, as were various items of diet. Distances were great, and physicians were not readily available; even if they were, the accepted treatment they gave for children's diseases was of doubtful value. Many of the ingredients and extracts used as medicines were incredibly revolting and absolutely ineffective, at best. Houses were not well built, and the roaring chimneys scorched within a distance of a few feet and left the rest of the house unheated. Then, too, many curious ideas prevailed about child rearing. One was that children—at least parts of them—had to be toughened. One such part was their feet. Colonial New Englanders were always wetting children's feet with cold water to harden them. Children were deliberately made to wear thin-soled shoes so that the "wet may come freely in." Josiah Quincy writes that in his boyhood he sat more than half the time with wet feet. But above all, in its incredible uniqueness and selective significance, was the requirement, in New England at least, whereby all children had to be baptized in the meetinghouse the first Sunday after birth. The particular point about this requirement was the fact that New England meetinghouses were unheated until after the Revolutionary War. Bearing this fact in mind, we are in a position to appreciate the full import of the following entry in the diary of Judge Sewall of Boston, under date of January 22, 1694: "A very extraordinary Storm by reason of the falling and driving of Snow. Few women could get to meeting. A child named Alexander was baptized in the afternoon." The ice in the baptismal font often had to be broken before the christening could proceed. Of a truth we can maintain with Mrs. Earle that such an ordeal may well have given rise to the expression "the survival of the fittest." Finally, other factors in the excessive infant mortality were the following: The laws of sanitation were disregarded, because unknown; disinfection, in the form of a

scant sprinkling of vinegar, was but feebly practiced; drainage was both non-existent and deemed of no importance.

6. Large families and child labor go hand in hand, and colonial America was no exception. In fact, parents increased the size of their families with an eye to their children's future usefulness. As early as 1629, Higgeson wrote in his *New England's Plantation* that "little children here by setting of corne may earne much more than their own maintenance," and less than a decade later the people of Rowley were praised because they "built a fulling mill and caused their little ones to be very diligent in spinning cotton wool."

Fortunately, as happens at times, self-interest and religious precept dovetailed neatly with each other. Following their favorite model, the Hebrews, the Puritans conceived of idleness as a 'sin. Truly, they insisted, the devil did find work for idle hands. Moreover, the problem confronted all classes. Wrote Judge Sewall in 1725 concerning his grandson: "Sam Hirst got up betime in the morning, and took Ben Swett with him and went into the Common to play Wicket. Went before anybody was up, left the door open; Sam came not to prayer at which I was much displeased." Another entry in the Judge's diary, made two days later, gives further information concerning Sam and his grandfather. This entry reads: "Did the like again, but took not Ben with him. I told him he could not lodge here practising thus. So he lodged elsewhere."

The value of the tasks performed by children in colonial days is obvious. Although there were some small industries which employed children, most of the work was on the farm. Here there were the customary chores to do—bringing in fuel, cutting feed, watering horses, picking berries, gathering vegetables, sawing and chopping wood; then too they could sow seeds, weed flax fields, hetchel flax, comb wool, split shoe pegs, make brooms, and the like. The custom of making Saturday a school holiday grew out of the necessity of catching up with the week's work in preparation for the Sabbath.

While these tasks were varied and often interesting, and constituted a phase of education not yet replaced in our modern system, the fact is that children, little children, worked hard. But adults worked hard, too. Hard work was a colonial necessity for both. The struggle for existence in the New World was a stern reality.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. i, pp. 124-127, 286-288.

7. The well-being of the family was conceived to depend on rigid family discipline. The behavior of children toward their parents and elders was formal and meek. Parents were addressed as "esteemed parent" or "honored sir and madam"; a pert child was thought to be delirious and bewitched. Reading both between the lines and the lines themselves of the following letter, written by a eleven-year-old Long Island miss to her grandfather, tells us a great deal:

Ever Honored Grandfather:

Sir: My long absence from you and my dear Grandmother has been not a little tedious to me. But what renders me a Vast Deal of pleasure is Being intensely happy with a Dear and Tender mother-in-law and frequent opportunities of hearing of your Health and Welfare which I pray God may long Continue. What I have more to add is to acquaint you that I have already made a Considerable Progress in Learning. I have already gone through some Rules of Arithmetic, and in a little Time shall be able of giving you a Better acct of my Learning, and in mean time I am Duty Bound to subscribe myself

Your most obedient and  
Duty full Granddaughter  
Pegga Treadwell<sup>6</sup>

The rod was universally accepted as the instrument of subjugation. John Robinson, the Pilgrim preacher, stated the prevailing philosophy in these words: "Surely there is in all children (tho not alike) a stubbornnes and stoutnes of minde arising from naturall pride which must in the first place be broken and beaten down so that the foundation of their education being layd in humilitie and tractableness other virtues may in their time be built thereon. It is commendable in a horse that he be stout and stomackfull being never left to his own government, but always to have his rider on his back and his bit in his mouth, but who would have his child like his horse in his brutishnes?"<sup>7</sup>

In this breaking and beating-down process, the school amply aided and abetted the home. Schools, like homes, resounded with strokes of the rod. Ferules, flat ladle-shaped pieces of wood to strike the palms of the pupils' hands, were a standard furnishing in colonial schoolhouses; birch rods, sold at goodly prices on the streets of London, were supplied in copious quantities on the New England hills; the flapper, a heavy piece of leather six inches in diameter, with a hole in the middle, and fastened to a pliable handle, was devised by a pitiless pedagogue

<sup>6</sup> Earle, *Colonial Days in Old New York*, pp. 16-17.

<sup>7</sup> Quoted from Calhoun, *op. cit.*, vol. i, p. 112.

of the times; and the cat-o'-nine-tails was widely known and used. Individual teachers, and no doubt particular parents, devised their own unique contributions to the corporal methodology of their day.

Colonial law was clear and positive in its support of paternal authority. For incorrigible disobedience to parents the death penalty was perscribed. The following law of New York, dating to the time that the colony passed from Dutch to English control, expresses the general attitude of the era: "If any Child or Children, above sixteen years of age, and of Sufficient understanding, shall smite their Natural Father or Mother, unless provoked and forct for their selfe preservation from Death of Mayming, at the Complaint of said Father or Mother, and not otherwise, they being Sufficient witness thereof, that Child, or those Children so offending shall be put to Death."<sup>8</sup> Punishment for lesser offenses of the kind were dealt with by the civil authorities. To deal with "divers children and servants" who "behave themselves disobediently and disorderly, towards their parents, masters and governors, to the disturbance of families," an early Massachusetts law gave authority to magistrates to "summon offenders and have them punished by whipping and otherwise."

8. A separate aspect of child life in colonial days, yet closely related to the matter of family discipline, was the marked emphasis upon manners and courtesy. This was a carry-over from the earlier days in old England when children were sent to school or placed in great men's houses to learn the courtesies and formalities of life, and when these things were considered more important elements in education than philosophy and the classics. In her delightful and penetrating chapter on manners and courtesy in her *Child Life in Colonial Days*, Mrs. Earle shows how, at a time when neighborhood life comprised the whole outside world, these refinements of human relations were what made life endurable, and that, viewed from this angle, the legislation and lawsuits involving lying, name calling, scandalmongering, etc., were really essential to the keeping of the peace.

Authors and readers of modern books on etiquette need to be reminded that similar books existed in days far removed from the present. Various such printed books go back to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and these, together with those of later date written by colonial authors, were widely used. There was *The Babees Book*; the *Lytell Children's Lytell Boke*; the *Boke of Curtasye*; and the *Schole of*

<sup>8</sup> Quoted from Earle, *Colonial Days in Old New York*, p. 16.



Vertue; and extracts of these will convey, as perhaps nothing else can, the emphases in child deportment in colonial days.

First follows an often-used list of instructions for table etiquette.

Never sit down at the table till asked, and after the blessing. Ask for nothing; tarry till it be offered thee. Speak not. Bite not thy bread but break it. Take salt only with a clean knife. Dip not the meat in the same. Hold not thy knife upright but sloping, and lay it down at right hand of plate with blade on plate. Look not earnestly at any other that is eating. When moderately satisfied leave the table. Sing not, hum not, wiggle not. Spit nowhere in the room but in the corner, and wipe it with thy foot.

Supplementing these are the following instructions:

Eat not too fast nor with Greedy Behavior. Eat not vastly but moderately. Make not a noise with thy Tongue, Mouth, Lips, or Breath in Thy Eating and Drinking. Smell not of thy Meat; nor put it to Thy Nose; turn it not the other side upward to view it upon thy Plate or Trencher. Foul not the napkin all over, but at one corner only. Gnaw not Bones at the Table, but clean them with thy knife and hold them not with the whole hand, but with two Fingers. When thou blowest thy Nose, let thy Handkerchief be used. . . .

Intriguing to the modern reader is the emphasis upon the long-neglected art of good listening: "When any speak to thee, stand up. Say not I have heard it before. Never endeavor to help him out if he tell it not right. Snigger not; never question the Truth of it."

Quite fashionable were the etiquette manuals which set forth their injunctions in verse, concessions no doubt to the progressive wing among parents and educators of the time. Part of one of these follows:

Make cleane your shoes, and combe your head,  
And your cloathes button or lace;  
And see at no tyme you forget  
To wash your hands and face.  
. . . . .

Burnish no bones with your teeth,  
For that is unseemly;  
Rend not thy meate asunder,  
For that swarves from curtasye.  
Dip not thy meate in the Saltseller,  
But take it with thy knife.  
And sup not lowde of the Pottage,  
No tyme in all thy lyfe.  
Defile not thy lips with eating much,  
As a Pigge eating draffe;

Eate softly and drinke mannerlye,  
Take heed you do not quaffe.  
Scratche not thy head with thy fyngers  
When thou art at thy meate;  
Nor spytte you over the table boorde;  
See thou dost not this forget.

Of all the directions for general deportment in these etiquette books—and there were many—probably none so appeals to the modern reader familiar with the ways of contemporary youth than the one indicating the proper behavior of a young person when spoken to by a grown person: “Not to lumischli cast thine head a-down, but with a sad cheer to look him in the face.”

Perhaps the best general picture of the deportment expected of colonial youth is given by the kinsman biographer of David and John Brainerd, who were born in Connecticut in 1718 and 1720, respectively:

A boy was early taught a profound respect for his parents, teachers, and guardians, and implicit prompt obedience. If he undertook to rebel his will was broken by persistent and adequate punishment. He was taught that it was a sin to find fault with his meals, his apparel, his tasks or his lot in life. Courtesy was enjoined as a duty. He must be silent among his superiors. If addressed by older persons he must respond with a bow. He was to bow as he entered and left the school, and to every man and woman, old or young, rich or poor, black or white, whom he met on the road. Special punishment was visited upon him if he failed to show respect for the aged, the poor, the colored, or to any persons whatever whom God had visited with infirmities.”<sup>9</sup>

9. From all that has been said concerning parental authority, it is easy to understand the desire of parents to control closely the courtship of their children, particularly their daughters, and that the right to do so was granted to them by law. The Puritan lawmaker, especially, who meddled with so many detailed aspects of life, could not leave untouched so vital a part of family and individual relationships, and the early age at which courtship and marriage customarily occurred gave to such legislation the sanction of common sense. Although there were many cases in which legal barriers to courtship were more honored in the breach than in the keeping, nevertheless the court records of the time are dotted with indictments, convictions, fines, imprisonments, and whipping-post treatments for those who took matters into their own

<sup>9</sup> Earle, *Child Life in Colonial Days*, p. 224.

hands. Let us relive, in imagination and for the sake of example, the drama of Jacob Murline and Sarah Tuttle. It happened in New Haven, Connecticut, on May Day in 1660. Sarah went to the neighboring Murline home to get some thread. Some loud jokes were exchanged with the two Murline misses when their brother Jacob entered the room, seized Sarah's gloves, and demanded the centuries-old forfeit of a kiss. "Whereupon, they sat down together; his arm being about her; and her arm upon his shoulder or about his neck; and hee kissed her, and shee kissed him, or they kissed one another, continuing in this posture about half an hour." Such kissing, let it be made clear at this point, was unauthorized. Moreover, Mr. Tuttle, Sarah's father, was a man of substance and of dignity. Promptly and angrily he brought suit against Jacob, the charge being that Jacob had inveigled his daughter's affections. The facts were established by adequate testimony. Finally the court asked Sarah whether Jacob had inveigled her, and she replied, "No." The court was outraged and baffled, for her answer precluded any judgment being rendered against Jacob. But the ends of justice had to be served, so the court fined Sarah, gave her a severe lecture, and called her a "Bould Virgin." Sarah was impressed. Demurely and piously she answered that she hoped that "God would help her to carry it Better for time to come." We cannot but be relieved, even after a lapse of almost three centuries, to find that she did learn to carry it better, for two years later the fine, still unpaid, was reduced by half.

It is not to be assumed, however, that parental control over courtship was supreme and unchallenged. Willful maids then as now overrode the parental mandate, and legal support for their independence was, at times, forthcoming. For above the parental authority was that of the general society or community. In a new country that needed population, discouragement of its legitimate increase by the personal motives of individual parents had to contend with the public interest; hence when parental prerogatives were exercised past a certain point to the undue delayment of marriage, the young people could appeal to the magistrates to bring their unruly parents to terms.

10. Looming large in the childhood of our forebears was the emphasis upon the religious aspects of life. The curing of souls began very early in life. For this there were two reasons. The first was the general tendency to regard the child as a miniature adult, which meant that the child's needs and experiences, and the procedure used with him, were

the same as for the adult, an inference that was applied to spheres of life other than the religious. The second reason was the common acceptance of the idea of child depravity. Whitfield, the great preacher, likened children to rattlesnakes and alligators, which he said were likewise beautiful when small. Jonathan Edwards called them "young vipers." He said: "As innocent as children seem to be to us, yet, if they are out of Christ, they are not so in God's sight, but are young vipers, and are infinitely more hateful than vipers."<sup>10</sup>

The logical sequence of these two beliefs was a firm conviction regarding the necessity and propriety of infantile conversion. At the very outset of their lives, children were confronted with the terrors of hell, from which escape was possible only by accepting the procedures prescribed by their pious elders. What this implied in outstanding homes of the times may be gathered from the following recorded instances. For example, Cotton Mather wrote:

I took my little daughter Katy (aged four) into my study and there told my child that I am to dy shortly and she must, when I am dead, remember everything I now said to her. I sett before her the sinfull condition of her nature, and charged her to pray in secret places every day. That God for the sake of Jesus Christ would give her a new heart. . . . I gave her to understand that when I am taken from her she must look to meet with more humbling afflictions than she does now she has a tender father to provide for her."<sup>11</sup>

It is a relief to know that the Reverend Mather was spared to Katy for thirty years after this recorded conversation—indeed, he survived her.

That pillar of Boston colonial society, Judge Sewall, wrote with great feeling concerning his children. When Sam, his son, was ten years old, there appeared this entry in the Judge's diary:

Richard Durner, a flourishing youth of 9 years old, dies of the Small Pochs. I tell Sam of it and what need he had to prepare for Death, and therefore to endeavor really to pray, when he said over the Lord's Prayer; He seemed not much to mind, eating an Apple; but when he came to say Our Father he burst out into a bitter cry and said he was afraid he should die. I pray'd with him and read Scriptures comforting against Death, or O Death where is thy sting &c. All things yours. Life and Immortality brought to light by Christ.

"Stirred up more dreadfully to seek God," as the Judge put it, was his daughter Betty. The following entries concern her:

<sup>10</sup> Works of Jonathan Edwards, New York, 1881, vol. iii, p. 340.

<sup>11</sup> Calhoun, *op. cit.*, vol. i, p. 108.

When I came in, past 7 at night, my wife met me in the Entry and told me Betty had surprised them. I was surprised with the Abruptness of the relation. It seems Betty Sewall had given some signs of dejection and sorrow; but a little while after dinner she burst out into an amazing cry, which caus'd all the family to cry too; Her Mother ask'd the reason, she gave none; at last said she was afraid she should goe to Hell, her Sins were not pardon'd. She was first wounded by my reading a sermon of Mr. Norton's, Text, Ye shall seek me and shall not find me. And those words in the Sermon, Ye shall seek me and die in your Sins ran in her mind and terrified her greatly. And staying at home she read out of Mr. Cotton Mather—Why hath Satan filled thy Heart, which increased her Fear. Her Mother asked her whether she pray'd. She answered yes but fear'd her prayers were not heard because her sins were not pardon'd.

A fortnight later he wrote:

Betty comes into me as soon as I was up and tells me the disquiet she had when wak'd; told me she was afraid she should go to Hell, was like Spira, not Elected. Ask'd her what I should pray for, she said that God would pardon her Sin and give her a new heart. I answer'd her Fears as well as I could and pray'd with many Tears on either part. Hope God heard us.

Three months later still he made this entry:

Betty can hardly read her chapter for weeping, tells me she is afraid she is gon back, does not taste that sweetness in reading the Word which once she did; fears that what was once upon her is worn off. I said what I could to her and in the evening pray'd with her along.

Betty, we must add, survived to marry and bear eight children before she died at the age of thirty-five.<sup>12</sup>

One more example must suffice. Nathaniel Mather died at nineteen, but while he lived prayed thrice a day, not "slubbering over his prayers with hasty amputations, but wrestled in them for a good part of an hour." In his diary, in which he wrote out in detail his covenants with God, he included the following paragraph:

When very young I went astray from God and my mind was altogether taken with vanities and follies: such as the remembrance of them doth greatly abase my soul within me. Of the manifold sins which then I was guilty of, none so sticks upon me as that, being very young, I was *whittling* on the Sabbath-day; and for fear of being seen, I did it behind the *door*. A great *reproach* of God! a specimen of that *atheism* I brought into the world with me!<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Earle, *Customs and Fashions in Old New England*, pp. 11-12.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

11. It would be wrong to suppose that life for colonial children was wholly drab. That there were lighter and joyous moments is clear, even if we had only the complaints of the Puritan theologians to go by. The mere size of many families was enough to insure some recreational developments. But there is much evidence that, in spite of parental authority and the repressive spirit of the time, colonial children, in their search for fun and their love for sport, were much like children today. Even the colonial meetinghouse, sacred as it was and central to the life of the community as were its services, was not safe from the surgings of youth. Boys and girls were pests to many a parson, and had to be put under town surveillance. King Philip's War was considered a judgment from God on the Massachusetts colony for the "disorder and rudeness of youth in many congregations in time of worship of God, whereby sin and profaneness is greatly increased."

In 1772 the following action was taken in Farmington: "Where as indecencies are practised by the young people in time of Publick Worship by frequently passing and repassing by one another in the galleries; intermingling of the sexes to the great disturbance of many serious and well minded persons—Resolved that each of us that are heads of families will use our utmost endeavors to suppress the evils."

Despite the seriousness with which any levity at public worship was taken, the "wretched boys" presented a perennial problem, and many children were brought before the public authorities. The character of the misbehavior in such cases may be gathered from the record made by a Connecticut justice in 1750, regarding a small boy brought before him:

A rude and Idel Behavior in the meting hows Such as Smiling and Larfing and Intiseing others to the Same Evil

Such as Whispering and-Larfing in the meting hows between metings

Such as Larfing or Smiling and pulling the hair of nayber benomi Simkins at the time of Publick Worship

Such as playing with her Hand and fingers at her hair

Such as throwing Sister pentecost perkins on the ice it being Sabath day or Lord's day between the meting hows and his plaes of Abode.

Then there were the various games which colonial children played—tag, stone tag, and wood tag; honey pots, kite flying; marbles; hop, skip, and jump; cricket; leapfrog; hopscotch; squares; wicket; and many others. Coasting downhill became a most popular sport, although colonial youth had to win the right to enjoy it. A Massachusetts law of

1633 classified "common coasters, unprofitable fowlers and tobacco-takers" together as similarly detrimental. Even among the Dutch in Albany, the constables at one time were ordered to take the "small or great sleeves" in which "boys and girls ryde down the hills" and break them into pieces.

It is interesting to recall that football was played early in our history. In 1657, Boston passed a law which read: "Forasmuch as sundry complaints are made that several persons have received hurt by boys and young men playing at football in the streets, these therefore are to enjoin that none be found at that game in any of the streets, lanes or enclosures of this town under the penalty of 20s. for every such offence."

### *Variations in the Colonial Scene.*

As was pointed out earlier in the chapter, this picture of colonial childhood has been drawn primarily with reference to New England. It was there that the lines of the picture are clearest and most distinct. In other parts of colonial America, the picture varied, even though, for the most part, the general features remained. These variations grew out of the cultural differences in the groups which settled the respective colonies. The Dutch who settled New York, for example, were a milder species of the genus to which the Puritans belonged. True, the tradition of paternal authority was as strong among the Dutch as in New England, and Dutch children were respectful and subdued in their manners; yet, on the whole, they were on more familiar terms with their parents and had more ample amusements. It is significant that schoolmasters, in complaining of youthful subordination, referred to maternal complicity in the children's mischief.

In the other middle colonies, paternal authority was likewise strictly upheld, although the minutiae of child life were much softer than in New England. The emphasis here was less upon worship and the restriction of play, and more upon work. Perhaps the outstanding fact in the history of the middle colonies was the unsettling influence of the heterogeneity of the population. Liberalizing influences operated from the beginning, but emphasis on work was an acceptable common denominator. Sons of wealthy Quakers in Pennsylvania and New Jersey were often indentured. Every man had to have a trade or occupation to follow. Daughters of wealthy Pennsylvania farmers worked as servants in other homes to complete their training in the domestic arts. This was their substitute for what in other places and times has been spoken of as a finishing school. The chief complaints against children

and women in the middle colonies did not involve their religious activities and attitudes, as in New England, but "their going after fashions and ease to the neglect of butter-making, weaving, spinning and cooking."

Turning to the southern colonies, we find that the picture of early marriage, large families, excessive mortality, and youthful labor was much like that in New England. Concerning the spiritual and educational welfare of their children, colonial Southerners were solicitous to be sure, but the intensity was less and the vicissitudes were greater than among the Puritans. Family government in the southern colonies was patriarchal, but less harsh and forbidding than in other sections.

### *The Status of the Colonial Child.*

Enough has been said, it is hoped, to enable the reader to picture the colonial scene as the children were related to it. The basic concept concerning the child which the early settlers brought with them was that which prevailed in the Europe from which they came. This concept may be stated in its simplest form in these words: The status of the child was distinctly subordinate. A study of parent-child relationships of the time shows much that is interesting and unique, but seldom do we find the idea of children treated with any thought of their individual needs, capacities, or potentialities. Only as they fitted into the pattern of adult life in the community, only as their abilities and interests contributed to the welfare and interests of their elders were they considered to be of any importance. In the post-feudal period, as under feudalism and slavery, the personal and affectional relations of children to their own parents and to other older people were a distinctly secondary consideration. The dead hand of historical tradition, the pioneer conditions of colonial America, the emptiness of the country, the constant shortage of hands for labor all combined to reestablish the system of childhood exploitation in the early days of our history.

And yet, as we study this picture of colonial child life, we cannot but be impressed with the fact that, from the start, differences from the rigorousness of child life in Europe developed here in the New World, and that, as time went on, many of the harsh lines began to soften.

### THE STATUS OF CHILDHOOD IN CONTEMPORARY AMERICA

Against the picture set forth in the preceding pages stands the child in our contemporary society. Today, as can be readily perceived, the child and his interests and welfare are of prior and paramount im-



portance. Not only is this the dictum of recent legislation and judicial decisions, it is the tacit assumption in the organization of the lives of millions of families and hundreds of communities. In the children's division of that new Magna Charta of human rights which a century and more of social struggle has evolved in our western civilization, there are no emphases upon the rights of parents and relatively few upon the rights of society. Rather, they are upon the rights of children. Moreover, these rights are not simply new versions of the child's old prerogatives in the matter of food, shelter, and reasonable care; they are new rights, unknown and albeit inconceivable to parents and citizens of earlier centuries. The Children's Charter formulated by the third White House Conference on Child Health and Protection would have been as sacrilegious or unfathomable to the parents of a thousand years ago as the Declaration of Independence would have been to Louis XIV of France.

That the whole life of the modern child—all that is done and hoped and planned for him, either by individual parents or by organized social agencies—represents the opposite pole of the concept held two thousand or two hundred years ago, is obvious; through the welter of changing circumstances and criteria we seek for the substance of the change. What is the essential change in the nature of the status of childhood?

The answer proposed is this: The essence of the change is the child's shift from a subordinate and incidental position in a family group dominated by an autocratic parent to one of acceptance as an equal with his own personality, needs, and problems of development. More tersely stated, it is a change from a position of subordination to one of equality, both in the family and in the larger social group. Use words to hide the truth as we will, the fact of the matter is that for centuries the child was dominated by his elders to be exploited in their interests. He had no rights, except as they fitted into the interests of his elders or his kinship group. That the bases of established authority upon which this exploitation rested came at various times and places to be clothed in ethical terms may confuse but does not alter the essential fact.

Today the child is recognized as a human personality in a peculiarly vital stage of development. He is a coequal personality in the emerging democracy of the family. The guarding of this personality is the child's precious right, and the dangers which threaten it are recognized social problems; the development of this personality is his most precious op-

portunity, and the furtherance and guidance of that development are the concern of his elders.

### *The Nature of the Change.*

The great changes in human history occur, not in the mechanical gadgets which men use or in the institutionalized arrangements by which they live, but in their attitudes and in the values they accept. The revolutions of the past which have had great meaning for mankind are those which have taken place in the minds of men.

The outstanding change in the recent history of children has taken place in the minds of their elders. It has been essentially a change in the way in which older people, particularly parents, have come to regard children. This change has constituted a revolution in the life and status of children as a social element in the population.

Because this revolution has been achieved through gradual and voluntary concessions, rather than wrested by means of the more spectacular devices of bloodshed and riots, social historians have been slow to identify it or to appreciate its importance. Yet so profound and so far reaching in its consequences is this change in status proving to be that, viewed in the retrospect with a lengthened perspective, we may yet recognize it as one of the great revolutions of history.

#### FACTORS IN THE EMANCIPATION OF AMERICAN CHILDHOOD

Having in mind the nature and the epoch-making scope of this change, we propose in the remainder of this chapter to analyze the factors in American life which have been responsible for this transformation. Following the outline of the factors identified in the general analyses in Chapter XXV, we suggest that the emancipation of American childhood is the result primarily of four factors: the arithmetical, the economic, the ideological, and the familial. In each of these aspects of our life, great changes have occurred within the span of American history, and it is our purpose next to describe these changes and show their meaning for American childhood.

### *The Changing Arithmetic of Reproduction.*

In Chapter XXV it was pointed out that the arithmetic of reproduction has operated through the ages as a basic factor in determining the status of childhood. Specifically, what was described there was the "easy-come and easy-go" method of reproduction—natural, wasteful,

and involving a rather low value of the individual unit. This process, prevalent for centuries, was destined to change under the conditions attending the exploitation of the American continent and the emergence of the American culture. Although large families and high infant mortality rates continued in the New World for a time, the generally healthful conditions of life and the relative value of the individual resulting from the constant shortage of labor made for early emphasis on the conservation of child life. The result was the combination, for decades in our early history, of a high birth rate, a relatively low infant mortality rate, a rapid rate of population growth, and a high valuation of the individual unit. When, later, the birth rate began to decline but the demand for an ever larger population continued, the value of the individual unit increased even more. More detailed consideration will be given to this in a subsequent chapter; the two thoughts to be emphasized here are, first, the changing arithmetic of reproduction in our more recent history, and second, the fundamental significance of these changes for the status of American children.

#### *The Economic Development of the United States.*

More than three centuries ago, small settlements of Europeans were being established along the east coast of this country. They were the beginning of that epic instance of nation building which is the history of the United States. In the course of three centuries, these small, scattered settlements grew into a nation of 130 millions, and the continent which they opened and developed proved to be of unparalleled richness in the resources which western civilization needed. During this same period, the economic system was transformed from medieval landlordism with its prevailingly simple and rural pattern, to modern capitalism with its huge complex and interrelated processes and its gigantic cities. Considering this development objectively, it must be obvious that these factors, and their combination in point of time, are so unusual as to raise the question whether anything like it, in both nature and scale, can ever again happen in world history; conceived in its comprehensive enormity, it must be equally clear that such a development would loom large and with intimate constancy in relation to the other elements of our emerging culture. In other words, we cannot understand American life without understanding and keeping this economic background constantly in mind, because for three centuries it colored every phase of our national development.

Although every aspect of this changing economic pattern is important for our purposes, one in particular needs to be emphasized. This is the continued existence of the frontier. The direction and speed of our settlement of this continent, and the tremendous transcontinental distance involved, accounted for one of the distinguishing features of American life, namely, the constant rebirth of our civilization for the three hundred years of its history. This process of rebirth we have sensed on the westward-moving frontier, and its significance has been made clear by Turner, Paxon, and other historians.<sup>14</sup> What sociologists have overlooked is the fact that for several decades the arrival of large numbers of immigrants and the rapid development of industrial urban centers created, especially in our larger cities, a series of urban-industrial frontiers with many of the basic features of the earlier western frontiers, which operated after the early frontier on the slopes of the Pacific had ceased to exist. This process of rebirth, usually associated with the western frontier, has actually continued in the urban East down to the present time.

The relationship between the changing economic background and the changing status of childhood is merely a phase of the larger story of the role of the economic factor in the development of our entire culture. It is well to keep this in mind here, for it means that while certain effects on the status of childhood were obvious and direct, many were indirect and touched child status only as it reacted to general changes in the culture as a whole. The discussion that follows, then, is meant to be selective and suggestive.

1. Migration is a highly selective process. This was particularly true in the case of colonial migration to the New World, for it involved a lengthy and uncertain voyage over an inadequately charted ocean to an unknown land beset with many dangers and difficulties. The bases of selection were bound to be definite and rigorous, and one of them clearly was a marked interest in the future. This interest would have to be more than a personal, self-centered one; it would be an interest in the family's future, in children, in the migrant's children, and in the future of society, which means other people's children. Selectivity on this basis meant that from the beginning the American colonist was relatively a lover of children. The whole process of colonial migration involved the continuing selection of persons sufficiently interested in

<sup>14</sup> F. J. Turner, *The Frontier in American History*, Henry Holt & Company, Inc., New York, 1920.

the coming generations to make them exchange the certainties of the present for the prospect of the future. Building for the future is a child welfare process.

2. From the first days of our colonial history, children were wanted. All the social historians emphasize this fact. And the more the vastness of the unfolding continent and its needs impressed themselves upon the minds of the people, the more was the valuation of the child increased. It seems safe to make the generalization that in any situation in which the population is small and there are vast and valuable resources to be developed, children will tend to occupy an important position. Large families, under such circumstances, are an asset. The labor of grown sons and daughters is valuable. Children also give security against various foes and dangers—of man and beast and the forces of nature.

The continuing need for a rapidly growing population was a constant factor encouraging early marriage, large families, and a high status for childhood. As has already been intimated, it led public authorities to be rather impatient with parents whose strictness with their adolescent children interfered with these ends. Parents had the right to supervise and control the courtship of their children, it was true, but only within reason, and not so as to interfere with the interests of society. Here, as so often happens, the interests of the community take precedence over private rights.

3. In an old, settled society, what has been is accorded respect. The conventions of life have crystallized and are emphasized, traditions are revered, the old are consulted and obeyed. In a new world, men think primarily in terms of the future. In the face of new situations, the opinions of the young count for as much as those of their elders. In fact, the young are less likely to be encumbered by vestigial thinking. The hold of ancestral and paternal prestige is diminished; the trend is toward the transference of power to the more youthful members of the group. If the new country is rich, there is engendered a social optimism which tends to measure people by their future prospects rather than by the tokens of the past.

Expressed in terms of the family, all this means thinking in terms of descendants rather than of ancestors. "For the children" became the motto of many a pioneer family who broke new ground and endured loneliness and privation and danger, always with an eye to the con-

soling fact that their children would have a better chance, would grow up with the country and enter into their inheritance.

4. There were other reasons why the thoughts of many families in the New World should be directed so largely to the future. Unpleasant as it may be to recall, many people who migrated to America had no family tree which they could regard with much pride or satisfaction. American historians are not inclined to take literally Dr. Samuel Johnson's reference to the colonists as "a race of convicts," yet it is well known that from time to time the English authorities emptied their prisons upon the shores of America. Although it is true that many of these persons were guilty of what are regarded today as rather petty offenses, the fact remains that the families they established here in the New World would emphasize almost exclusively their future prospects rather than their past status.

The same thought applies to many other early settlers as well as the later immigrants. They may not have had criminal records, but they were individuals who had not succeeded signally in the Old World. Their coming to America was a new deal, it gave them a fresh start, it meant turning over a new leaf, it involved essentially turning their back upon the old life and hopefully facing the new. Expressed in terms of family life, this meant that the children embodied their dream of the future—the children were the future.

5. The ease with which young people could make their own way, independent of aid from their families, was another powerful factor in the emancipation of American childhood and youth. Land was the basis of the prevailing economy, it was cheap, and for many years there was an abundance of unoccupied land. The equipment needed to cultivate it was scant. As soon as a young man had gathered a few dollars he could look forward confidently to establishing a family of his own. The customary wedding gift to a son was a horse, some farm implements, and some seed; a girl received a bed, a cow, some kitchen utensils, a table, and some chairs. The relatives might help in erecting a cabin and a crude stable. Life was simple, the prime necessities were abundant, subsistence was certain.

Such a situation made for self-sufficiency and independence at an early age. After their earliest years, children were not essentially dependent upon their parents. The tendency was toward the early loosening of the family bond. Undue prolongation of parental preroga-

tives was likely to result in estrangement. It was not that younger people always made their own way early in life, but that they so easily could, which was the emancipating factor.

As the nineteenth century wore on and land became less cheap and accessible, particularly in the older parts of the country, the factory system made its appearance, and many boys and girls went to work in these new industrial establishments at an early age. This development is usually referred to as part of the history of child labor, with rather definite condemnation of it. Whatever we may say about the employment of these children, measured by present-day standards, from the standpoint of our discussion here it had an emancipating influence in the relation of children and their elders. Give a child his own pay envelope, and the parent-child relationship is changed; have him share his wages with his parent, and he has gone a good part of the way in purchasing immunity to parental control.

6. The continuing process of vertical mobility in American society has been a far greater factor in parent-child relationships than is usually appreciated. Throughout their history, the people of the United States have been "on the up," economically speaking. Each generation has wanted to live better than preceding ones, and has succeeded so generally that such success has been accepted as natural and almost inevitable. This process has been viewed for the most part as an index of the economic progress of the country; what has only seldom been considered is its meaning in the relationship between these generations and their attitudes toward each other.

To speak more specifically, for three hundred years the American child has been taught constantly to aim higher than his parents, to "begin where they left off." In this he has been aided and abetted, as a rule, by his parents, who have sacrificed, subordinated, driven themselves even, all to the end that he would have better advantages than they had. Even the unlettered immigrant, preoccupied with his own problems of adjustment to the New World, has felt impelled to give his children better advantages—often much better—than he and his forebears had.

Desirable as certain features of this process may be, it is hardly favorable to the development of a respect for parents. What has happened at best, in many cases, has been the undermining of parental prestige. Home after home, past and present, have been characterized by the following contrasts: parents preoccupied with business interests, children vying for social acceptance; parents whose own youth was one

of poverty, pampered children living in the lap of luxury; parents trained to habits of simplicity and frugality, children thoughtlessly prodigal and wasteful; parents coming from simple rural American or European homes, children knowing naught else but the superficialities, sophistications, and cultural advantages of complex urban centers; children being given advantages which parents never have had, and able to act as the directive authorities in these matters for their parents.

7. Occupational mobility throughout the history of this country has played an important role in changing the status of childhood. Unlike the practice in older, more fixed civilizations, where a child customarily follows the occupation of his father, the very nature and needs of our rapidly expanding economic development made this largely impossible. The overwhelming proportion of the workers in this country have gone into jobs different from those of their parents.

The significance of this for parent-child relationships is easy to grasp. American youth has been freed from parental supervision while at work, and since this form of supervision cannot always be separated from more comprehensive supervision, it has often meant freedom from parental supervision in general. Then, too, differences in the economic careers of parent and child have involved and facilitated divergence of interests, and this is part of the larger process of growing apart.

8. The American population has been relatively very mobile. The exploitation of the continent would not have been possible by a race of "stay-at-homes." Earlier these movements were largely westward; but more recently, large-scale migrations in other directions have been taking place. Modern students, who may think that our mobility is a recent phenomenon, will be enlightened by the comments of a foreign observer in 1864: "The American family is like a covey of birds: the young escape as soon as they have wings to fly, and claws for defence. They forget the maternal nest, and often the parents themselves no longer recognize them. They have had the trouble of protecting them in their first feebleness, but, this task accomplished, their rights and their duties end together. It is the law of nature in all its crudity: the family association lasts only so long as it is indispensable to its members."<sup>15</sup>

The population movements which have featured American history

<sup>15</sup> Duvergier De Hauranne, *Huit mois en Amerique*, quoted from Calhoun, *op cit.*, vol. iii, p. 163.



have had their counterparts in family histories. The expansion of the United States has been in large measure a series of westward jumps of successive generations. The Middle West was the New England and Middle Atlantic States of a later date; Colorado and Utah, the more intrepid of the next generation; the Pacific coast is the contemporary edition of all of them.

This entire process has, from one angle, been disruptive, tending to weaken family ties. Particularly was this true in the case of successive generations. Mobility of residence put space between them, just as differences of occupation made for divergence of interests. These two factors were peculiarly complementary in their effects; taken together, they were of continued and fundamental importance in changing the status of American youth.

9. Thus far, the discussion has been in terms of children, with no reference to any differences on a sex basis. From the very beginning, however, certain factors operated particularly to affect the status of girls. In a rough, wild, new country, it is evident that conventions and restraints concerning women which are natural and necessary in more staid cultures become untenable. Everyone, regardless of sex and, to some extent, age, must take a hand. The seclusion of women, for example, is not feasible. The frontier spirit is democratic, for young women as well as for the rest of the population; special treatment does not fit into the folkways.

Then, too, there was the effect of the arithmetic of the situation. For the greater part of our history, and particularly in the newer parts of the country, there has been a deficit of women. Between the older settled East and the more frontier-like West there went on, for decades, almost a commercial traffic in unmarried women. This shortage of wives, actual and potential, tended early toward the breakdown of the parental control of courtship and marriage, and where the control continued, young girls exercised considerable independence in their love affairs.

Other factors particularly affecting the status of girls might be mentioned, but enough has been said to indicate that from the beginning of our history the relative freedom of the American girl was the natural product of conditions of life in this country.

10. The final aspect of the role of the economic factor in the changing status of American childhood to be emphasized here is the transition from a state of deficit to one of surplus, economically speaking. The reference here is to the enlarging capacity of our nation to finance

the changing position and treatment of children, with special emphasis on the historical operation of this factor. Whether the surplus condition has passed permanently for the time being, whether it ceased with our large-scale discounting of the future in the huge borrowings during and since World War I—particularly since 1930—is an important question but has no bearing upon our historical analysis.

The rapid increase in the wealth of the United States, particularly between the Civil War and our entrance into World War I, is well known, and there can be no doubt of its fundamental importance in the transformation of our life. Of the general social implications of this transition no one has written with more insight perhaps than the late Simon N. Patten. His concept of a pain and a pleasure economy and of the process of the change from one to the other, although described almost a half century ago and not so well known to modern students, remains the most penetrating analysis of the fundamental changes involved. In an age of deficit, there exists what he called a pain economy. The primary purpose of this economy is the avoidance of pain, protection from enemies, the prevention of want, safety against destruction. The basis of the social institutions of such an economy is the fear of enemies and of pain. The purpose of its state is protection from enemies; of its morality, avoidance of destruction; of its religion, help from supernatural powers against foes; of its families, the satisfaction of primary physical needs. In a pleasure or surplus economy, the objectives of society are concerned with the promotion of welfare, with the enrichment and enlargement of the good life. Social values and ideals are recast and social institutions are remade to function toward these newer ends. The transition from a pain to a pleasure economy, Patten declared, was a difficult one, full of stresses and dangers.<sup>16</sup>

The child is a part of this economy and culture that is reconstructed as a result of this transition. In a pain economy, he is a pawn in the war against the constantly recurring threat of direct want, a pawn to be utilized, to be exploited. His function is to aid in the struggle for survival. Of affection between parents and child there may be a great deal, but life is hard and rigorous and imposes sharp and cruel limitations. In an age of surplus, the child becomes a luxury, the subject of social solicitude, the object of social planning. There is conscious pro-

<sup>16</sup> Simon N. Patten, "The Theory of Social Forces," *Publications of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 1896, chap. 4.

motion of his welfare. The question of how he can help in the struggle for survival is displaced by the question as to what can be done to develop him to the limit of his possibilities. The period of preparation for life is lengthened. Laws against child labor take form, and their age limitations are revised upward again and again. Schools multiply and the age of compulsory attendance is raised. Supplementary services and resources aimed at the more intensive cultivation of child capacities are developed. Children are reckoned in terms of their future possibilities, and the expenditure of the social surplus on them is conceived as a promising investment.

### *The Ideological Factor.*

American ideology is a colorful combination compounded of many elements. Some of these elements have changed from time to time throughout our history, others have remained rather constant. Our conception of and emphases on our ideology change too, for each generation recasts its ideas on the bases of its changing interests and needs. With this appreciation of the changing complexity of American ideology, the thesis is advanced here that this ideology has been compounded largely out of three basic and rather constant ingredients: humanitarianism, science, and democracy. The relationship of each of these to the changing status of childhood will be discussed briefly.

*Humanitarianism and the Child.* There is an abundance of evidence that humanitarianism has increased greatly in its range in recent years. We need not go back more than a century and a half in the most advanced countries of western culture to find a good deal of abuse of animals and human beings—the extensive existence of slavery, marked cruelties in the treatment of criminals, the brutal beating of small children, little interest in the poor except on the basis of personal almsgiving, incredible horrors in the treatment of the feeble-minded and insane. In the years since then, the condition of one after another of these groups has been transformed: the treatment of the sick, the insane, and various physically and mentally defective and sick persons has been humanized; there has been widespread amelioration in the condition of criminals; a large amount of social legislation has been passed to improve working conditions; slavery has been abolished; women have been placed more nearly on an equality with men; societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals have flourished; and ex-

tensive philanthropic movements have been directed toward the relief of distress and the reduction of poverty.<sup>17</sup>

Modern humanitarianism could not but affect the status of children. To begin with, children were bound to benefit from the ordinary implications of a general movement which affected the status and treatment of virtually all subject, exploited, and neglected groups. As one of these groups, children would naturally share in any general upward revision of the standards applied to such groups. But more than that, by their very nature they would be the particular beneficiaries of such a movement. After all, they were nearest and dearest to the persons who were influenced by these new humanitarian considerations, and no society could concern itself indefinitely with the freeing of slaves and better treatment for criminals without also taking thought of its children.

*Science and the Child.* Science is the architect of our civilization. Its achievements dominate modern culture, and its spirit shapes the character of our intellectual and spiritual life. To the western mind, all other expressions of the creative spirit seem somewhat futile. The final appeal in all problems and disputed points is to the scientist, and his judgments we consider to be altogether true and righteous.

The history of science is the story of its progressive application to an ever wider range of phenomena. First applied to the material objects of the non-living world, with the consequent development of the physical sciences, the scientific method came in time to be applied successively to the field of organic life, with the resultant renaissance of the biological studies, and then to the realm of psychic phenomena, with the emergence of the modern psychological sciences. Finally, the most complex phase of human life, namely, human association, has come to be studied scientifically, with the gradual emergence of the social studies as scientific disciplines.

One phase of this most recent extension of the scientific method has been its application to the social welfare movement. Conceived originally with good intention and born at the dawn of human history out of an emotional concern for the unfortunate, this movement has been going to school, figuratively speaking, in the temple of science. The lessons learned in that temple, the methods utilized, the attitudes

<sup>17</sup> Maurice Parmelee, *Poverty and Social Progress*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1916, chap. 17.

emphasized, are revolutionizing social welfare just as science has revolutionized other fields of human effort. We are concerned, at this point, in appraising in somewhat broad terms how the application of the scientific method to social phenomena in general and to the social welfare movement in particular has affected our attitude toward the child and his importance.

One definite way in which this application of the scientific method has affected the status of work with children has been through its emphasis upon the genetic point of view. The point of view of modern science is genetic. Since the time of Charles Darwin, and as a result of his work, all science, broadly speaking, has become biological. Every science sees its problems against an evolutionary background, which means that everything is viewed in the light of its historical development. In other words, when we say that the point of view of modern science is genetic, we mean that every science sees its problems in a historical perspective, and that if we want to understand anything we must understand its origin and development.

Such a point of view applied to problems of human life has revolutionary significance for childhood, for it makes this period of life of paramount importance. Childhood is the period of origins, the stage of beginnings. It is the period in which so many problems arise and are manifest in their incipient stages. This can be illustrated with particular aptness in the history of the science of psychology. G. Stanley Hall, the Nestor of American psychology, was also its outstanding specialist in genetic psychology.

A second way in which the application of the scientific method to social phenomena and problems affects child study and work with children is through its emphasis on the principle of causation. The point of view of modern science is causal; its object is the establishment of causal relationships. This is saying horizontally much the same thing we say vertically when we point out that the point of view of modern science is genetic; either approach has the same significance for childhood.

This is, perhaps, the essential difference in the way our ancestors and ourselves regard the child. Our ancestors saw these earliest years as a negative period of life, a sort of necessary evil full of idle deviltry and cantankerous mischief; the child survived it and his parents endured it as best they could, until late adolescence when life hesitatingly began. We, of a later vintage, regard childhood as a foundation period

of great importance, a period of twig-bending during which the shape of the future tree is determined.

To be sure, students of human problems have emphasized causal antecedents for many years. Only recently, however, has come the knowledge that these causal relations are neither so few in number nor so simple in their operation as had previously been supposed. In the study of these relationships, there has been a transfer of interest and emphasis from the broadly obvious to the subtly effective. It is this that is essentially new in the contemporary approach to the study of behavior problems. Modern psychiatry and the psychoanalytic procedure have multiplied many times the significance of the earliest years. Theories regarding the causation of crime, mental disease, distorted character, economic failure, and domestic maladjustment have had to be reconstructed on the basis of the contributions of the modern sciences and resolved into elements of juvenile conditioning.

Under the suggestive influence of the genetic and causal points of view of modern science, the social welfare movement is coming to a new and better understanding of its task. The cumulative effect of recent discoveries in the life sciences has been to make the social welfare movement more "child-minded." The modern mind, wrestling with the problems of human welfare, finds them where Plato dreamed his ideal state—in the directed development of the next generation. Science now dictates what our tender sympathies long have counseled. Society's "acres of diamonds" lies revealed in the cradle inside the door, and social statesmanship finds its task in the heart of a child.

*Modern Democracy and the Child.* It is interesting to speculate on what the status of the child would be today in this country were it not for the rise and dominance of democracy. What effect would the other factors working to emancipate the child have had without the favoring support of this comprehensive, conditioning background? The emancipation of the American child must be considered, then, against the background, and as an integral part, of the general democratization of society. As such, it takes its place with other familial aspects of this democratizing process—the decay of patriarchy, the waning of paternal authority, and the greater freedom of and opportunities for women.

The most familiar instances of the operation of democracy are found in the political field. Political democracy has had direct and immediate significance for the status of children, for its basic tenet is to make the

individual the ultimate unit of social development. The emancipation of the child, the decay of patriarchy, the waning of the father's authority, and the changed status of the mother are all natural consequences of political democracy, which recognizes not clans or families, but individuals. "In a democracy the idea of superior fades before the idea of equal sovereignty. All men are sovereigns. Personality is exalted, and the political status overflows and democratizes family institutions."<sup>18</sup>

But democracy is more than a political creed or system. It is, in the ultimate analysis, an idea, an attitude, a value, a spirit, which permeates every phase of life. It expresses itself in and through our religious, economic, scientific, and social developments, as was pointed out in Chapter IV, and it is as a common core in these developments that it stimulated the changing status of childhood.

Perhaps all that has been said concerning the ideological factors—the rise of humanitarianism and the development of modern science and of the democratic way of life—comes to this: The current American ideology involves a new conception of the worth of the individual, and an appreciation of the child as the promise and hope of that individual.

### *The Familial Factor.*

The child is so inextricably a part of the family that no discussion of a change in his status is complete without reference to changes in the family. Changes in the status as well as in the structure and functions of the family must be considered, then, as factors in the changing status of childhood. For a more complete study of the changing family, the reader is referred to the excellent books on the family which are now available. Here only selected aspects of these changes will be dealt with briefly.

*Historic Status of the American Family.* "Families are the nurseries of the church and the commonwealth; ruin families and you ruin all." This maxim of the early colonial fathers is indicative of the high status which the family as a social institution enjoyed in those days. This status was the natural result of the conditions of colonial settlement, and certain factors inherent in our national development have tended to maintain and increase this relative status until comparatively recent years. These factors will be outlined briefly at this point.

<sup>18</sup> Calhoun, *op. cit.*, vol. ii, p. 53.

The American colonist of English stock was a home builder from the beginning. It was his interest in his family, his home, and his children, and his belief that their future was circumscribed in the Old World which led to his migration to the New.

Some of the other nationality groups which figured prominently in the settlement of the United States were noted for their domesticity. This was particularly true of the German colonists. From the beginning, they manifested a distinctive fondness for home life. They gave America a distinct type of woman, interested primarily in the household arts. German husbands and fathers in colonial America were noted for their interest in home life and their participation in the simple pleasures of their family groups. Similarly, the Dutch in New York were mentioned repeatedly because of their conspicuous success with the marriage relationship. Both they and the Huguenots farther to the south were a liberalizing influence as far as family relationships were concerned. The Huguenots were particularly noted for their pleasant home life.

Migration is always a selective process, and from the standpoint of the present discussion it is significant that the English migration to colonial America, as well as that of the Germans, Huguenots, Dutch, and Swedes who settled among them, occurred in the form of family units. Moreover, this family character persisted in the immigration stream until far down into the nineteenth century, and among such groups as the Russian Jews, until into the twentieth century. It is this movement in terms of family units that makes these migrations differ from those of the French and Spanish to colonial America, and this distinction does much to explain the differences in the success of these respective groups as colonizers.

The relative lack of development of other institutions in the early centuries of our national existence favored the family. The whole historical background of these population movements, the experience of the colonists in their home countries, was not such as to favor any immediate development of a strong state, particularly because of the close connection of colonial governmental organizations with those of Europe. The school too, while not neglected, was relatively weak in those days. The church in New England, but apparently not so much so elsewhere, was the only social institution approaching the family in importance. The family was the one substantial social institution in a nation which had discarded hierarchical religion and reduced the power of government to a minimum. The entire colonizing process placed a



premium upon the pioneers who moved in groups of families and tended to settle in areas contiguous enough to facilitate cooperation for defense, worship, and other prime social necessities, but for all other purposes utilized the family as the cradling and shaping agent of the new life.

What made possible this relative reliance upon the family was the self-sufficiency of the home as an economic unit. The almost complete self-sufficiency of the family in the economy of the time is pointed out by all economic and family historians. More will be said about this in the discussion of the functions of the family; the fact to be noted here is the importance of this self-sufficiency in support of the family's dominant role as a social institution.

Another factor of considerable importance was the relative isolation of the homes. This prevailed rather generally in the early history of this country, and in many cases persisted down to comparatively recent times. The general density of population for the greater part of our history and among our people has been very low. Rural settlements for the most part took the form of isolated homesteads rather than agricultural villages as in Europe. This isolation tended to throw the family upon itself, upon its own resources. It reduced tremendously the possibility or likelihood of much social control of the family, especially as far as detailed or continuing control was concerned.

Especially did the isolation of the frontier tend to turn the family within itself. The absence of social contacts, the silence and monotony, the lack of competing distractions, all characteristic of the frontier, made for strong family interests. This pioneer isolation tended not only to increase the importance of the family but also to soften and deepen its relationships. Husband and wife, parent and child, were partners in a common enterprise in work, and playmates in their recreational pursuits.

*Effect upon the Status of Children.* The relatively high status of the family as a social institution did not per se have a softening effect upon the treatment of children or tend to raise their status. Conceivably the importance of the family, coupled with the relative lack of importance of the state in the earlier centuries of our history, might have formed the basis of a highly repressive policy toward children. Conceivably the autocracy of the Roman parent might have been restored on the frontier. Who would there have been to say naught? Fortunately the other factors identified in this and the preceding chapter pre-

vented that from happening. Neither the economic nor the ideological factors and incentives would have fitted in with such a turn of events. Rather they gave this strong family interest a liberalizing and democratic turn to aid still further in the emancipating process. The historic status of the American family operated, then, in the direction of a high level of parental interest in children, the mathematical, economic, and ideological factors and incentives combining to dictate the direction of that heightened interest toward more democratic objectives.

We must not be misunderstood when we say that the family today has a lower status in the institutional framework of society than it did in the earlier period of our history. In part this has been due to the rise to preeminence of other institutions, notably the state and the school. The status of both of these has been revolutionized within the past century; hence the relative position of the family would be altered, even if no changes had occurred in it. But there have been changes, principally in its structure and functions, and it is to these that we turn next.

*Changing Structure and Functions.* All students of the modern family agree that the family has been transformed in recent decades. In so far as its structure is concerned, the older, larger, semi-patriarchal form has given way to the contemporary, smaller, democratic, companionship type. Many of the aspects and factors involved in this change have been alluded to in the preceding pages. They include: (1) the passing of the family function of economic production; (2) the gainful employment of women, particularly married women, outside the home; (3) the mechanization, and the consequent lightening of the burdens, of housekeeping; and (4) the small-family system and the resultant shrinkage in the physical basis of the home.<sup>19</sup>

With these changes in structure have come significant changes in the functions of the family. The decline of the home in the field of economic production has been accompanied by its increasing importance as a consumption unit, emphasizing rational consumption as a factor in the positive well-being of its members. In the area of protective functions, the rise of the civil authority and its agencies has led the family to shift its attention from dangers to life and limb to the protection of the interests of its members. The recreational needs of children tend to be satisfied less and less within the home, with

<sup>19</sup> James H. S. Bossard, *Social Change and Social Problems*, Harper & Brothers, New York, rev. ed., 1938, pp. 598-606.

the result that parents are concerned more with the selection, evaluation, supervision, guidance, and coordination of the family's recreational life. The responsibility for the education of children is now turned over to the school, the parents devoting themselves to the supervision and supplementation of the educational process. The small-family system makes possible the development of a more intensive parenthood.<sup>20</sup>

From the standpoint of the child, the changing functions of the family have involved, first, the decline of its control over, and responsibility for, various phases of child development; second, the development of various specialized agencies to whom is transferred the responsibility for selected segments of the child-rearing process. The first has many consequences, but considered in relation to the status of childhood it tends to enable the family to give the child services that supplement those of the specialized children's agencies, and to stimulate in an increasing proportion of families the development of an improved technique of parenthood. The second has led inevitably to the development of new vested interests concerned directly with the raising and maintenance of the status of childhood.

When this latter development is examined objectively and in terms of social process, the following steps emerge rather clearly: The creation of specialized child development agencies and services means, from the occupational standpoint, specialized jobs. This leads in turn to the development of specialized training facilities—schools, courses, institutes, and teaching personnel. Not only do these function to satisfy the demands for specialized training, but, naturally perhaps, they magnify the importance of the jobs for which they offer training. Time passes, and a specialized group of jobholders develops in a particular field; gradually, these jobholders become conscious of themselves and their common interests; ultimately they begin to organize, both to protect their interests and further to exploit their field. Thus arises a vested interest. The claim having been staked off, the developing resources having been organized, the next step is intensive cultivation. Against the background of a constantly increasing emphasis on its fundamental importance, refinements of specialized service are developed. They are labeled *the technique*. A literature specialized in scope and ambitious in tone is fostered; public interest and appreciation are cultivated. The leaders in the specialty now tend to be of the promoter type, rather than

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 606-613.

concerned with ideals of service or research. There is a growing intolerance of any critical analysis of task or technique. Jobs are at stake, budgets are imperiled, funds are threatened.

This brief account of the natural history of the development of a specialized service is sufficient to indicate that the parceling-out of the care of children to specialized service groups results, as time goes on, in the creation of various vested interests vitally concerned in promoting the importance of children, their needs, their welfare, and their status. For decades this factor has been operating silently and subtly in the development of ideas, programs, legislation, etc., for children, thus involving an obvious rise in the status of childhood.

The history of many of these specialized service activities and groups shows that they begin in an experimental way, supported by private philanthropic means. But as time goes on and the service is established and is sold more and more to the public, public interest and discussion increase. Legislative aspects gradually emerge, and still further public discussion follows. Ultimately a public program takes form, the services are taken over as an obligation of the public treasury, and public agencies plan comprehensive programs to cover the particular field. All this means that the child, his needs and his importance, enter more and more into the public consciousness; standards of child care, which yesterday were the dreams of a few idealistic folk, tomorrow are the irreducible minimum below which no child must be allowed to live.

Finally, what has been described is a continuing process. These specialized types of child services are subject constantly to the forces of revision. New needs arise and stimulate new types of specialized services or modified forms of older ones. Sometimes these new types or modifications are added to those already established, resulting in marked growth and expansion of the range of the specialized services and agencies involved. This may proceed until the proportions attained are out of harmony with the group culture as a whole, raising problems of culture correlation such as are discussed in the closing pages of this volume. Or—and this is a second possibility—the new types of services may challenge the older, vested interests, with all the attendant evidences of conflict.

#### SUMMARY

1. Colonial America reproduced, with certain modifications, the European pattern of child status. This pattern appeared most clearly in New England, and can best be studied there.

2. The colonial family had high status, was patriarchal in form and large in size. Maternal and infant mortality were high. Child labor was common, and from an early age. Family discipline was rigid, as was that of the school. Colonial law clearly supported both parent and teacher in their disciplinary measures. Manners and courtesy were markedly emphasized. Courtship was controlled closely by the parents. Religious experience was emphasized early in the lives of children. Large families seem, however, to have permitted some recreational developments, and references to children's games are numerous, even if sometimes in the form of complaints.

3. Contemporary America is seeing a revolutionary change in the status of children; they are viewed in terms of equality with other members of the family and recognized as coequal personalities in the emerging democracy of the family.

4. Four factors are primarily responsible for the emancipation of American childhood: the changing arithmetic of reproduction; the economic development of the United States; American ideology, a compound of humanitarianism, science, and democracy; and changes in the status, structure, and functions of the family.

## The Child Welfare Movement<sup>1</sup>



Thus far, the status of childhood has been conceived in the broadest terms, as involving a definite segment of the population whose relationship to the rest of the population is a product of various factors operating in the larger society. It seems pertinent, next, to consider the rather definite social movement known as the child welfare movement, which is directed specifically toward the problems and general welfare of children, with some particular reference to those in need of special care. This movement, initiated as part of a visionary groping for social betterment, has in recent years been dominated by a professionally trained personnel, working toward definite objectives and actuated by attitudes and points of view that are influencing the status of childhood as a whole. The present chapter seeks to analyze briefly: (1) the nature and scope of the child welfare movement, (2) types of child welfare activities, (3) the historical development of the movement, (4) interests and motives in child welfare work, and (5) child welfare in terms of social process.

### NATURE AND SCOPE OF THE CHILD WELFARE MOVEMENT

In every civilized country there exists today a well-defined social movement whose object is the conscious promotion of the well-being of its children. The piecemeal beginnings of these movements go back to the opening of the nineteenth century, but the major part of their achievements everywhere has been gained within the past fifty years. The general objectives emphasized by these movements, and the specific means utilized, have varied from one country to another, depending upon the nature of the culture into which the children are born, the

<sup>1</sup> Parts of this chapter are taken from the author's *Marriage and the Child*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1940, chap. 2, and are reproduced by permission of the publisher.

The first of these is concerned with children in need of special care. Most of these children are being cared for away from their own parents or other natural supporters. In times past such children have been customarily spoken of as dependent, delinquent, and neglected children, these terms being used to include children who presented such problems of behavior, health, abuse, or economic need that the agencies of society stepped in to assume responsibilities ordinarily discharged with reasonable acceptance by parents or natural supporters. Earlier, there was a good deal of emphasis upon separating these children into academic categories; today it is more customary to group them on the basis of their common need of special social care.

The second type of child welfare work handles certain needs and problems which pertain to all children. These problems grow out of the acceptance by the community, and society at large, of certain "irreducible minimums" for all children, whether they are living with and being cared for by their parents or not. Rather generally today certain rights are accorded to all children—the right to be wanted, the right to life, the right to be physically well, the right to play, and the right to be mentally healthy. These emerging rights are being translated into concrete standards, and this second type of child welfare work is concerned with the many different kinds of activities which aim to raise child life in general to these minimum requirements. Illustrations of this type of child welfare work include the operation of a birth control clinic, the maintenance of a child health center, the conduct of a nutrition class, the organization of a recreation center, and the opening of a mental hygiene clinic.

The third type of child welfare work is directed toward parents as such. The effort here is to extend help to them so as to enable them to discharge more effectively their duties and opportunities as parents. Such services may take the form of protecting family life against the hazards of our industrial order, or guiding parents to the best and most approved methods of dealing with children. Examples of this type of service include education for family life, classes for young mothers for instruction in the care of babies, and health service to parents.

The fourth type of child welfare work, which has been emerging during the past two decades, is concerned with the community and larger social situations which are themselves directly related to the problems of children. Such situations are often as vital for the welfare of children as conditions in their own homes. Thus, particularly since the third White House Conference on Child Health and Protection

(1930), there has emerged an emphasis upon the somewhat broader program "of social endeavor, to be sought through many complex changes and adjustments,"<sup>2</sup> as one of the basic approaches to the problems of children's well-being. We might, then, speak of this as the community approach to child welfare and the community type of child welfare service, and this is done in certain quarters. And yet, many of the activities that are developing in this field are far broader than the term community customarily connotes. It is an approach in terms of the larger society, albeit often expressed through local community forces. With this brief introductory outline of the main types of child welfare work, we are in a position to consider, at greater length, how each of these developed, quite naturally, in the evolution of the child welfare movement of the United States.

#### THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHILD WELFARE MOVEMENT

##### *The Child-Saving Stage.*

For many centuries there have been children who, for one reason or another, have been thrown upon the larger society for care. In most of these cases, the basic condition was dependency, and whatever social response was made was directed toward saving the child from the grosser forms of want or exploitation. Social responsibility in this initial stage may therefore appropriately be referred to as child-saving work. Because the conceptions of need and appropriate social response varied with the passage of time and from one country to another, it seems fitting to review the development of this initial stage of child care in the United States.

*Early Beginnings.* We began in this country, and we continued for many years, with the principles of the relief of need and distress which were formulated in Elizabethan England. Two of these principles concern us here. One was the theory, basic in all Elizabethan poor relief legislation, that the local community was responsible for the care of children whom parents or privately supported agencies left dependent and neglected, and that the financial cost of this responsibility was to be paid out of publicly collected tax funds. Such funds could be expended either for the maintenance of public institutions, principally the poor-

<sup>2</sup>Lawrence K. Frank, "The Child," *American Journal of Sociology*, May, 1931, p. 1006.



house, in which needy children could be placed, or for the relief of persons who cared for these dependent children in their own homes. These two forms of relief expenditures are known as public indoor relief and public outdoor relief, respectively.

The second fundamental principle of child care established by Elizabethan legislation involved the apprenticeship or binding-out of children. This principle was the product of one of the accepted bases of social organization of the time, viz., that every person must be attached to some family, to some occupation, and to some locality. This was accepted in both England and here during the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. Children who were recognized as in need were those who were not thus attached, usually because of the death of or neglect by a parent or parents. What was more logical as a solution of such a problem than to attach these children to a family which would give them this threefold anchorage of home, occupation, and locality? Thus arose the indenture or binding-out system which was practiced widely in England for centuries and in this country from 1636 until into the twentieth century. It was legally abolished in Pennsylvania in 1927.

*The Situation by 1800.* The opening of the nineteenth century found the Elizabethan poor law system fully established in most of the sixteen states which then comprised the Union. Homer Folks, summarizing the situation as it had developed by 1800, points out the following significant facts:

1. Outdoor relief, i.e., the relief of the poor in their own homes, was the method by which the larger number of needy children as well as adults were cared for at the end of the eighteenth century.

2. Children and adults were cared for in almshouses which were maintained under the direct control of the public authorities. Almshouses were first built in the large cities, but as time went on, smaller cities and then the counties began to build them. (Philadelphia, the largest city in the country in 1800, was at that time using its second public almshouse, located in the area bounded by Tenth, Eleventh, Spruce, and Pine streets. This had been built in 1767.)

3. Indenture was common. It had been carefully regulated by laws throughout the eighteenth century.

4. There were some specialized children's institutions; seven were in existence by 1800. One of these, publicly developed and maintained,

was located in Charleston, South Carolina; the other six were privately established.<sup>3</sup>

*Contributions of the Nineteenth Century.* One hundred and eighty-eight years later a committee, reporting to a national professional group of child welfare workers regarding the most important things that had been done for children in the nineteenth century, presented the following brief summary:<sup>4</sup>

1. The establishment and maintenance of separate institutions for the care of the separate classes or groups of handicapped children found at the beginning of the nineteenth century in mixed almshouses and jails, in inadequate homes and in the streets and alleys. For example:
  - a. orphan asylums
  - b. institutions for the blind
  - c. institutions for the deaf
  - d. institutions for the crippled
  - e. institutions for the low-grade feeble-minded
  - f. institutions for the epileptic
  - g. reformatories and industrial schools for delinquents
2. The substitution of the beginnings of the placing-out and boarding-out of dependent, neglected, and delinquent children under supervision, for the old indenture and apprenticeship of these children without supervision.
3. The beginnings of separate parts of our present juvenile court system in the form of:
  - a. probation
  - b. separation of children from adults in court and under detention
4. The establishment of societies for the prevention of cruelty to children.
5. The beginnings of compulsory school attendance.
6. The beginnings of child labor legislation.

From this brief summary it is clear that social work for children during the greater part of the nineteenth century was concerned chiefly with separating from the community class after class of children who were especially afflicted by some outstanding handicap like homelessness, neglect, blindness, deafness, a crippled body, mental deficiency,

<sup>3</sup> Homer Folks, *The Care of Destitute, Neglected and Delinquent Children*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1902, chap. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Henry W. Thurston, chairman of the Children's Committee, in report to the National Conference of Social Work. Cf. *Annual Report*, National Conference on Social Work, 1918, pp. 48-49.

delinquency, etc. One after another of these groups were withdrawn from the undifferentiating almshouse or public outdoor relief system and given separate and specialized care in accordance with the existing understanding of their particular need. In other words, the purpose of social work with children was to save distinct classes of dependent, defective, neglected, and delinquent children.

*The First White House Conference.*<sup>5</sup> As the initial area of social work with children became thus established, leaders in the field turned to the development of standards of procedure and to the complementary task of having them accepted throughout the different parts of the country. In 1899, the National Conference of Charities and Corrections adopted a report which set forth the principles of child saving, and the Conference of 1906 accepted a restatement and elaboration of them. But it was the first White House Conference on Child Welfare which signalized the organized acceptance of these principles on a nation-wide basis.

This Conference was called by President Theodore Roosevelt at the request of a small number of people prominent in child welfare work. Some two hundred were invited, and the Conference opened in January, 1909. It engaged the best minds in the field of child welfare; it was concerned with the intimate discussion of standards of work; and at its conclusion it voted unanimously for the endorsement of principles which were considered to be fundamental in child-saving work. Included among these principles were the following:

1. That children shall not be removed from their own homes because of poverty.
2. That the most important and valuable philanthropic work is not the curative but the preventive.
3. That when it is necessary to remove children from their own homes, they shall, as far as possible, be cared for in foster homes.
4. That such homes shall be selected with care, adjusted to each child with finesse, and supervised wisely and thoroughly.
5. That institutions shall be used primarily for temporary care, and where used, shall be of the cottage type.
6. That careful histories shall be kept of all children, and that this

<sup>5</sup> For an excellent short summary of this and the other White House Conferences, the reader is referred to an article by Homer P. Folks, "Four Milestones of Progress," in *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, November, 1940, pp. 12-17.

record keeping, as well as the whole treatment process, shall be done with what is known as good social case work.<sup>6</sup>

The first White House Conference, then, crystallized in its recommendation the experience of a century in the care of dependent, neglected, and delinquent children. It marked the coming of age of the child-saving stage in the history of the child welfare movement; and its recommendations, by common consent of the students in this field, have had far-reaching and practical effects. Incidentally, this Conference followed by a matter of months the Children's Act adopted by the British Parliament in 1908 and popularly known as the "Children's Charter." Although less comprehensive than its name implies, this law also marked an effort to make a correlated approach to certain problems of childhood.

*The Children's Code Movement.* The principles thus established, both here and in Great Britain, called attention to the inadequacy and confusion of the legislative enactments relating to children. Recognition of this developing opinion led to what is known as the Children's Code Movement. This resulted from the efforts made in a number of states to bring together, unify, and revise in compact and coordinated form the laws relating to the various groups of children who had been singled out for social care.

The first state to take action along these lines was Ohio. In 1911, a Children's Code Commission was appointed; its report, an excellent piece of coordination and revision, was presented to and accepted by the state legislature in 1913. The success of the Ohio project led to the appointment of similar commissions in New Hampshire and Oregon, 1913; Missouri, 1915; Minnesota, 1916; Michigan and Montana, 1917; Delaware, Wisconsin, and Kansas, 1918. By 1930, a total of thirty-seven states had created such commissions. Various supplementary private agencies were set up to aid the work of these commissions, such as the National Committee for Standardizing State Laws, 1915, the Russell Sage Foundation; and the National Child Labor Committee. Similar service was rendered by the Federal Children's Bureau. Although there were considerable variations in the achievements of these commissions in the different states, on the whole they represented a significant movement with many marked contributions toward the

<sup>6</sup> J. Prentice Murphy, in *Annual Proceedings*, National Conference on Social Work, 1922, p. 25.

development of the newer concepts of child welfare in coordinated and effective form.

*The Federal Children's Bureau.* One of the recommendations agreed upon by the first White House Conference read as follows: "A bill is pending in Congress for the establishment of a Federal Children's Bureau to collect and disseminate information affecting the welfare of children. In our judgment the establishment of such a Bureau is desirable, and we earnestly recommend the enactment of the pending measure." This measure was passed in 1912. The law creating the Bureau directed that it shall investigate and report "upon all matters pertaining to the welfare of children and child life among all classes of our people, and shall especially investigate the questions of infant mortality, the birth rate, orphanage, juvenile courts, desertion, dangerous occupations, accidents and diseases of children, employment legislation affecting children in the several States and Territories."<sup>7</sup>

The Federal Children's Bureau has played a significant role in the history of child welfare. Although its work for the first few years was confined largely to studies of infant mortality, the Bureau, under the able leadership of its three chiefs—Julia Lathrop, Grace Abbott, and Katharine Lenroot—has contributed a variety of signal services. Space does not permit more than the mere mention of its numerous research studies; its popular education and demonstration projects; its compilation in tabular form of the laws relating to child labor, juvenile courts, illegitimacy, sex offenses against children, mothers' pensions, child placement, adoption; its promotion of conferences; and its administrative responsibilities under federal legislation pertaining to child welfare.

Attention here is focused chiefly upon the historical significance of the Bureau. Its creation may be said to have ushered in a new era in the child welfare movement. Its legal authorization, combined with its wise leadership, has made the whole child, and the children of all classes, the subject of its concern. Specific problems have been considered in relation to each other and to community programs for all children. Writing in 1929, Thompson says: "The outstanding achievement of the Children's Bureau has been in furnishing a unified approach to the problems of child life. Its work has contributed very

<sup>7</sup> 37 United States Statutes 79 (1912), Section 2, as reproduced in Grace Abbott, *The Child and the State*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1938, vol. ii, p. 621.

greatly to the marked advances in legislation and in standards in child welfare in the last two decades. When established in 1912 it was the first public agency of the sort to be created. Among the governments which have since followed the example of the United States are Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, Chile, Czechoslovakia, Germany, Italy, Mexico, Peru, Russia, and Yugoslavia."<sup>8</sup> The work of the Bureau naturally facilitated the change in the history of child care to which we next turn.

### *Child Saving Evolves into Child Welfare.*

In the early stages of the history of the care of any needy group, the conspicuous are the first to receive attention. The primary interest of socially-minded citizens, during the nineteenth century, in children with special handicaps was entirely natural; but so also was the inevitable next step in the development of that movement. This was the emergence of social concern for the welfare of all children. This concern grew naturally and logically out of experience with specialized care for particular types of need. One cannot long deal, for example, with blind children without learning how children become blind, this leads in turn to ideas regarding the prevention of blindness in other children; and this ultimately but inevitably suggests safeguarding the sight of all children. Similarly, special institutions for the deaf imply that all children need ears to hear; restrictions on child labor lead directly to problems of school attendance and recreational facilities; and a critical appraisal of foster homes cannot but focus attention, before long, on the necessity of proper homes for all children.

In short, the workers engaged with these groups of specially handicapped children came in time, as did their fellow workers with adults, to an appreciation of the economy of preventive work. This led them to a consideration of the essentials of welfare upon which children with normal opportunity thrive, and this, in turn, to a consideration of such essentials for all children. This progress, wrote Thurston in 1918, "has been symbolized by our changing emphasis in the use of terms. *Child saving* had to yield a large place to *prevention* and now both . . . are giving way to the larger and newer conception of *child welfare*."<sup>9</sup> It was during the second decade of the twentieth century that the term

<sup>8</sup> Laura Thompson, in *Social Work Year Book*, 1929, Russell Sage Foundation, New York, 1930, p. 72.

<sup>9</sup> Thurston, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

"child welfare" began to take on this more comprehensive meaning, began to be used more and more to mean not simply social case work with specially handicapped children, but also the various organized movements and activities directed at promoting the welfare of all children.

*The Second White House Conference.* It was this broader implication of the term that was uppermost in the minds of the men and women who participated in the regional and Washington Conferences on Child Welfare that were held during the year 1919. Just as the first White House Conference on Child Welfare in 1909 crystallized the standards of the first type of child welfare work outlined at the beginning of this chapter, so the second or Washington Conference of 1919 formulated the standards for the second type, in which the emphasis is upon what President Wilson, in his letter suggesting the conference, called the "irreducible minimum standards for the health, education, and work of the American child."

Unlike most conferences, the second White House Conference consisted of a series of meetings, the first of which was held in Washington, D. C., on May 5, 1919, and was followed by meetings in eight leading cities. The final report of these conferences was presented under three heads, and will be summarized briefly at this point.

Public Protection of the Health of Mothers and Children. First, as to maternity: maternity and prenatal centers sufficient for all cases not receiving supervision from private physicians; clinics for treatment needed during pregnancy; hospital facilities for complicated cases; licensing and supervision of all midwives; adequate income to allow mothers to remain at home during the nursing period; education of the general public to the problems of maternal and infant mortality. Second, as to infants and preschool children. complete birth registration; prevention of infantile blindness; establishment of children's health centers; dental and other clinics; adequate hospital facilities for children; state licensing and supervision of all child-caring institutions; general educational work in child health problems. Third, as to school children: proper physical school facilities; adequate playground and recreational facilities; adequate medical and nursing school service; complete standardized basic physical examination by physicians once a year, with monthly weighing wherever possible; continuous health records for each child; supervision to control communicable diseases, with available necessary clinical facilities; open-air classes with rest

periods and supplementary feeding for pretubercular, tubercular, and malnourished children; and health education for school children. Fourth, for adolescent children: the foregoing health services adapted to the adolescent age; compulsory education until at least sixteen years of age; and legal protection from exploitation, vice, drug habits, etc.

#### Standards for Children Entering Employment.

The Minimum Standards for Children Entering Employment require an age minimum of 16 for employment in any occupation, save that children between 14 and 16 may be employed in agriculture and domestic service during vacation periods.

The educational minimum would require all children between 7 and 16 years of age to attend school for at least nine months each year, continuation schools to be provided for all between 16 and 18 who are regularly and legally employed and who have not completed the high-school grade, and vacation schools to be provided for all.

The physical minimum would require: That a child shall not go to work until a physical examination by an authorized medical officer has shown him to be of normal development for his age and physically fit for the work he is to perform.<sup>10</sup>

Standards Relating to Children in Need of Special Care. These included: (1) reaffirmation of the conclusions of the first White House Conference regarding the care of dependent children; (2) a declaration of modern principles for the care of illegitimate children, so the handicaps of their birth may be counterbalanced; (3) the establishment of two guiding principles in the care of physically and mentally defective children: first, increasing study of the children themselves, and second, the greatest practicable degree of individual development and freedom compatible with safety for the child and the community; (4) the necessity of adequate facilities for and differential treatment of the feeble-minded; (5) standards for juvenile court organization and procedure; (6) consideration of the special needs of rural children; and (7) an appeal for the use of the scientific method in the field of social work with children.<sup>11</sup>

#### *Child Welfare Through the Home.*

"That there is a new era at hand in which the customs and traditions of child raising will be subject to scientific examination is undisputed. As an integral part of such a program, the mental hygiene of the child

<sup>10</sup> Julia C. Lathrop, "Standards of Child Welfare," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, November, 1921, p. 5.

<sup>11</sup> For a short and readable account of the second White House Conference, see *ibid.*, pp. 1-8.



will be the inescapable responsibility of its parents or guardians. The child today is too frequently brought up in a haphazard, unconscious way." Thus wrote a psychiatrist in a symposium on child welfare in 1921.<sup>12</sup> In 1930, in another symposium on the same subject, one reads: "In today's social thinking, a comprehensive child welfare program includes (as one of its major divisions) . . . direct efforts to help parents and parent substitutes more adequately to care for and guide the growth of their children."<sup>13</sup>

These two statements serve to identify a period and a stage of development in the history of the child welfare movement. The period covers the years after World War I, from about 1918 to 1930; the development is a type of child welfare service which centered its efforts upon the family and home situation of the child; its basic philosophy holds that the young child is not a thing detached and apart from his home, but is so much part and parcel of that environment that he and his home must be considered as a unity. Two points of emphasis stand out in these efforts to promote the welfare of children by means of their homes. One is directed toward protecting the family against the hazards of the modern industrial order; the other aims at guiding parents to discharge more effectively their obligations and tasks as parents.

The first of these measures, the protective, was suggested by the Washington Conference of 1919. Although detailed standards were not formulated, the concluding statements of the findings of the Conference recognized that certain broad aspects of social welfare, such as an adequate wage for the father and wholesome housing and living conditions for the family, were fundamental to the realization of any child welfare program. In the course of the next few years, as a result, such movements as those for the prevention of and compensation for accidents, the control and elimination of industrial diseases, the family allowance system so extensively developed abroad, the whole relief and social work program—all these and others were being reexamined in relation to the specific problems of family protection and the well-being of children. There was repeated reference to these as constituting the "new values in child welfare."<sup>14</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Leonard Blumgart, "Some Aspects of the Mental Hygiene of the Child," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, November, 1921, p. 53.

<sup>13</sup> Ralph P. Bridgman, "Ten Years' Progress in Parent Education," *ibid.*, September, 1930, p. 32.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. James H. S. Bossard and J. Prentice Murphy (eds.), "New Values in Child Welfare," *ibid.*, September, 1925.

The second emphasis in relation to the family aspects of child welfare was upon training parents for the task of parenthood. More and more it came to be charged, and confessed, during the teeming twenties, that merely being a father or mother was not in itself sufficient preparation for the complex and difficult job of rearing children. Swiftly the conviction grew that fathers and mothers needed to be educated to this business of parenthood, and that no social program for the welfare of children could be complete unless it sought to make available to parents the results of experience and of the scientific study of behavior that were accumulating so rapidly. Thus took form what is usually referred to as the parental education movement.

This movement, which developed so rapidly during the third decade of this century, is the resulting of many factors. It is in part a phase of the general adult education movement which, in its broadest aspects, represents the efforts of intelligent adults to keep up with the times; in part it is the natural heir of the extensive work in popular education in homemaking and home management which was carried on under the auspices of the federal government after the passage of the Smith-Lever Act of 1914 and the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917; but mostly it should be viewed as a definite phase of the child welfare movement resulting from three sets of influences. The first of these comprehended the accumulating findings in the study of human behavior. From child guidance clinics, from the offices and clinics of psychiatrists, from reports on the lengthened therapy of the psychoanalysts came a mass of evidence, the weight of which was to crown childhood as the period of paramount importance in personality development. It was the earliest years which mattered most; it was the first conditionings which were the most permanent; and parents were virtually the sole agents that molded children through these years. The second precipitating factor was the intensification and multiplication of problems of child rearing which resulted from social changes. The rapidity and scope of the changes in our social life, the fact that so many of them affected the young in particular, left many parents confused and perplexed, so that the eager search for help that now developed was neither unusual nor visionary. Finally, there was the disconcerting influence of the changes in the nature and functions of the family itself to which sociologists were giving more and more attention. A democratic form of the family was replacing the semi-patriarchal form of the immediate past; coercion was giving way to subtle persuasion; suggestion succeeded

compulsion; and training in obedience was being replaced by visions of an educational progressivism which people seemed to accept in inverse proportion to their understanding of it.

It is the purpose of this chapter not to set forth the concrete activities which have been carried on under the various types of child welfare work identified, but rather to indicate how each developed in a sequence of ideas, what their basic philosophy and purposes are, and the general period of time during which the particular type or emphasis appeared. Hence it will suffice to say in conclusion that by 1925 a permanent organization, the National Council of Parent Education, was formed to coordinate efforts in this field; that in 1928 the first National Conference of Parent Education Workers was held; that by 1932 courses in parent education were offered in one or more colleges and universities in at least twenty-five states; and that by 1935 a fifty-three-page pamphlet, issued by the U. S. Office of Education, was required merely to catalogue and describe briefly the agencies, public and private, that were working in this field.<sup>15</sup>

### *Child Welfare Through the Larger Social Situation.*

Important as the family setting may be for the first development of personality, the life of the child manifestly is not confined to the family. Early in life he comes in contact, through the school, the church, recreational groups, etc., with the life of the larger community. Moreover, the family in which he lives from the beginning is part of a larger neighborhood, community, or area, which in turn is part of the more inclusive state, region, or nation. It seems obvious, then, that the child cannot be studied, understood, or treated adequately without considering him in relation to his social setting. Nor is such a procedure new to scientists, who in working with human organisms have placed them experimentally in different situations to observe the effects upon their behavior. Particularly have physiologists and psychologists followed this procedure. It seems even more pertinent to include this approach in the study of human behavior, and the past decade has witnessed an increasing emphasis upon it. This approach has taken the

<sup>15</sup> Ellen C. Lombard, *Parent Education Opportunities*, U. S. Office of Education Bulletin No. 3, Government Printing Office, Washington, 1935. For a more adequate summary of developments in this field, the reader is referred to a chapter by Mrs. Sidonie M. Gruenberg in the November, 1940, volume of *The Annals*; to chapters XVII-XX in Folsom, *The Family and Democratic Society*, *op. cit.*; or the quarterly issues of *Child Study*.

form of considering the child, in part, in relation to the more immediate community; and in part, in relation to the life of the larger society of which the community is a part. In other words, this is the philosophy which is the basis of Chapters II, XX, XXI, and XXII of this book.

In the history of the child welfare movement, this emphasis has evidenced itself most clearly in the community approach to juvenile delinquency. Reference to this has been made in Chapter XXII particularly as set forth in the summary statements by Shaw, Plant, and Healy.

*The Third White House Conference.* Appreciation of the importance of the local community setting of the child came to imply in turn that the community is a reflection of the larger cultural and social processes, which suggests that the problems of child welfare are but an index of the conditioning forces of the larger society. This idea was implied definitely in much of the work of the third White House Conference on Child Health and Protection in 1930. This Conference was called by President Hoover "to study the present status of the health and well-being of the children of the United States and its possessions; to report what is being done; to recommend what ought to be done and how to do it." It not only covered the subjects discussed by the first two Conferences, but announced that "all children in their total aspects, including those social and environmental factors which are influencing modern childhood," were included.

Preliminary to the meeting of the Conference, an elaborate organization for fact finding and the framing of conclusions was established, and a book of 643 pages containing summary outlines of reports by the seventeen major committees was placed before it. The final reports of the Conference were published over a period of years. Consisting of a series of thirty-two volumes with 10,511 printed pages, they constitute a model of fact finding, as well as a contribution of unique value to all students of child welfare. Perhaps the most publicized result of the Conference was the Children's Charter, which contained nineteen declarations of what every child should receive for his education, health, welfare, and protection. These provisions follow:

I. For every child, spiritual and moral training to help him to stand firm under the pressure of life.

II. For every child, understanding and the guarding of his personality as his most precious right.

III. For every child, a home and that love and security which a home provides; and for that child who must receive foster care, the nearest substitute for his own home.

IV. For every child, full preparation for his birth, his mother receiving prenatal, natal, and postnatal care; and the establishment of such protective measures as will make childbearing safer.

V. For every child, health protection from birth through adolescence, including: periodical health examinations and, where needed, care of specialists and hospital treatment; regular dental examination and care of the teeth; protective and preventive measures against communicable diseases; the issuing of pure food, pure milk, and pure water.

VI. For every child, from birth through adolescence, promotion of health, including health instruction and a health program, wholesome physical and mental recreation, with teachers and leaders adequately trained.

VII. For every child, a dwelling place, safe, sanitary, and wholesome, with reasonable provisions for privacy, free from conditions which tend to thwart his development; and a home environment harmonious and enriching.

VIII. For every child, a school which is safe from hazards, sanitary, properly equipped, lighted, and ventilated. For younger children, nursery schools and kindergartens to supplement home care.

IX. For every child, a community which recognizes and plans for his needs; protects him against physical dangers, moral hazards, and disease; provides him with safe and wholesome places for play and recreation; and makes provision for his cultural and social needs.

X. For every child, an education which, through the discovery and development of his individual abilities, prepares him for life; and through training and vocational guidance prepares him for a living which will yield him the maximum of satisfaction.

XI. For every child, such teaching and training as will prepare him for successful parenthood, homemaking, and the rights of citizenship; and, for parents, supplementary training to fit them to deal wisely with the problem of parenthood.

XII. For every child, education for safety and protection against accidents to which modern conditions subject him—those to which he is directly exposed, and those which, through loss or maiming of his parents, affect him indirectly.

XIII. For every child who is blind, deaf, crippled, or otherwise physically handicapped, and for the child who is mentally handicapped, such measures as will early discover and diagnose his handicap, provide care and treatment, and so train him that he may become an asset to society rather than a liability. Expenses of these services should be borne publicly where they cannot be privately met.

XIV. For every child who is in conflict with society, the right to be dealt with intelligently as society's charge, not society's outcast; with the

home, the school, the church, the court, and the institution when needed, shaped to return him whenever possible to the normal stream of life.

XV. For every child, the right to grow up in a family with an adequate standard of living and the security of a stable income as the surest safeguard against social handicaps.

XVI. For every child, protection against labor that stunts growth, either physical or mental, that limits education, that deprives children of the right of comradeship, of play, and of joy.

XVII. For every rural child, as satisfactory schooling and health services as for the city child, and an extension to rural families of social, recreational, and cultural facilities.

XVIII. To supplement the home and the school in the training of youth, and to return to them those interests of which modern life tends to cheat children, every stimulation and encouragement should be given to the extension and development of the voluntary youth organizations.

XIX. To make everywhere available these minimum protections of the health and welfare of children, there should be a district, county, or community organization for health, education, and welfare, with full-time officials, coordinating with a state-wide program which will be responsible to a nation-wide service of general information, statistics and scientific research. This should include: (a) Trained full-time public health officials, with public health nurses, sanitary inspection, and laboratory workers. (b) Available hospital beds. (c) Full-time public welfare service for the relief, aid, and guidance of children in special need due to poverty, misfortune, or behavior difficulties, and for the protection of children from abuse, neglect, exploitation, or moral hazard.

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For every child these rights, regardless of race, or  
color, or situation, wherever he may live  
under the protection of the  
American Flag.<sup>16</sup>

It is clear from this Charter, as well as from the scope and conclusions of the third White House Conference, that by 1930 the field of child welfare had expanded to include every aspect of child life, and that child welfare problems are but a phase of the larger social welfare program.

*The Fourth White House Conference.* In 1939, a fourth White House Conference was held. It was known as the Conference on Children in a Democracy. Naturally it took a turn somewhat different from the three preceding Conferences, for it devoted itself more to the study of what had happened during the depression decade and to the for-

<sup>16</sup> George B. Mangold, *Problems of Child Welfare*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 3rd ed., 1936, pp. 13-15.

mulation of a program to deal with these needs. Underlying all its procedures, however, was the insistence that child welfare activities must comprehend the conditions under which all the nation's children live and grow to maturity. The major focal points in these conditions were identified as the characteristics of family life, including income, dwelling and assistance for the family in time of need; education; child labor; the health of children; children with special needs; and administrative factors and financing that affect public action. Recognition was given the increasing role in child welfare of the government—local, state, and federal—but the retention and further development of voluntary agencies was urged.

#### INTERESTS AND MOTIVES IN CHILD WELFARE WORK

Any movement which seeks to promote the well-being of one-third of the population is bound to appeal to many different groups of people with diverse interests and motives. Our next concern is to indicate briefly the more important of these interests and motives. It is to be understood that there is no intention of summarizing the child welfare activities of any particular group of persons who may be identified with any of these interests or motives; the aim is rather to describe the interests and motives themselves.

1. Sheer pity in the presence of helpless suffering is a generally operative force making for good works of all kinds, and nowhere is this stronger than in the case of a child. Hardened reprobates, closed hearts, emotions insulated with defensive mechanisms accumulated through many years—all will open to an infant's cry when closed to all other appeals. Different schools of psychology develop and elaborate the nature of this sentiment in different ways; it is enough here to emphasize its existence and its relative importance in the field of child service.

2. Concern for the child, more particularly in modern times, may not be without its roots in a feeling of fear. The experience of mankind, when recorded and analyzed, reveals this unmistakable lesson, that children may not be neglected with impunity. As we sow, so shall we reap—with children as well as with wheat. Whatever other elements may be involved—and human motives are never as simple as they seem—there is little doubt that in the background of some people interested in the welfare of childhood is a lurking dread of the consequences of neglect. "If we don't, we may wish we had."

3. There is, of course, excellent scriptural foundation for child welfare work. Nowhere does the New Testament rise to greater heights of lyric beauty and sweeping insistence than in the recorded words of Jesus concerning children. "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein" (St. Luke 18:16, 17). "And Jesus, perceiving the thought of their heart, took a child, and set him by him. And said unto them, Whosoever shall receive this child in my name receiveth me" (St. Luke 9: 47, 48). "Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me. But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea" (St. Matthew 18: 4, 5, 6). These and other references by Jesus to children, when considered against the background of the thought and practice in the period when they were spoken, indicate a conception of the importance of the child which is truly revolutionary.

4. It is the contention of modern schools of psychoanalytic thought that our choice of activities and occupations is often the result of the process of sublimation. This term is used to mean the mechanism whereby psychic energies which have their sources in the basic impulses of the individual are diverted, when unsatisfied, into artistic, literary, scientific, or other channels of activity. In other words, it is a redirecting of our fundamental drives or impulses so that they will find an outlet in ways that are acceptable to the self and the herd. Properly understood and evaluated, it is a general process which is the lot of all of us, but the most frequently used illustration involves the redirection of the sex drive of unmarried persons. Their activities and occupations are scrutinized particularly by amateur devotees of these schools of thought; and when large numbers of unmarried or childless adults are found in occupations dealing with children, the conclusion is emphasized that this selection of interest and occupation is a form of sublimation of thwarted sex and parental desires.

5. Much child welfare work of a concrete and practical sort in times past has resulted from the activities of some religious, fraternal, or other organization. The role of religious effort in behalf of dependent and



neglected children goes back to the dim beginnings of human history. The development of this work by the Roman Catholic Church during the Middle Ages was later carried over to other religious bodies and established a tradition early and widely followed in the United States. Subsequently fraternal and other organizations followed the example of the churches; the Masons had established orphanages as early as 1850.<sup>17</sup> Basic in the activities of these religious, fraternal, and other organizations seems to be the feeling of group consciousness and group responsibility for individual members. The conservation of the group's strength, its numbers, and the well-being of its members demands the protection of its component individual parts—this is an old and easily understood social policy.

6. On a larger scale, this same motive is evident in the nation's concern for the conservation of its human resources. Much child welfare work in recent years has been inspired or stimulated by a patriotic desire to develop our national strength. This explains why, during periods of war and crisis, child welfare measures multiply, and why political and military dictators emerge as leaders in movements to promote such measures. The state is merely a larger group than religious or fraternal bodies, and, like them, it turns its eye on the competition from other similar groups and is moved by obvious self-interest to humanitarian endeavor.

7. Just as dictators become interested in the well-being of children in order to build up their nation's military strength, so other persons, thinking and planning in the more general terms of an improved social order, see in children the most promising point of approach. Utopian schemes invariably involve plans for the reconstruction of society in terms of the next generation, which means the children of the present one. Other builders of the social future, with less ambitious dreams and with more appreciation of the inevitability of slower progress, are equally convinced that the lower age groups must be the objectives of their efforts. Interest in the building of a better social order is a basic motive in the child welfare movement.

8. The social scientist is interested in a better social order too, but his immediate emphasis is upon the factors and processes of human

<sup>17</sup> C. W. Areson and H. W. Hopkirk, "Child Welfare Problems of Churches and Fraternal Orders," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, September, 1925, pp. 85-96.

development. In pursuit of this emphasis, he is particularly interested in studying the child, his physical development, mental maturing, educational growth, and adjustment to group life.

Child research looms large in the rapidly expanding field of social research. "In many respects the most conspicuous and significant feature of the past two decades," wrote Gesell in 1930, "is the extraordinary increase in the volume of research relating to child development. This increase is the result of the expansion of the fundamental biological sciences and the new interest in the understanding of the mechanism and forces of social organization. The study of child development has become at once a branch of human biology and of social science."<sup>18</sup> This emphasis upon child study is another motive that operates to stimulate the development of child welfare work.

9. There remains to be considered what might be called the democratic motive, which seeks to supply to all children what the best and wisest parents want and try to give their own children. It is the basic objective of social programs and services for children. This is the essence of a program for children in a democracy: it is inherent in the faith by which a democracy lives.

#### CHILD WELFARE IN TERMS OF SOCIAL PROCESS

To certain persons, the term child welfare calls forth a picture of an exercise in sentimentality that has no place in a volume entitled *The Sociology of Child Development*. In the final section of this chapter an effort is made to orient this movement within a framework of sociological process.

#### *Domination as a Social Process.*

The relation of population elements and groups to one another is one of the basic problems of sociology; their interaction, the substance of social processes. Students of these processes have given a good deal of attention recently to the phenomenon of domination. Despite differences in terminology and other details, there is general acceptance among students of society that the struggle for power, with its attendant processes of domination and submission, runs colorfully and constantly through the course of human history.

<sup>18</sup> Arnold Gesell, *The Guidance of Mental Growth in Infant and Child*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1930, p. 11.

Domination and its complement, submission, apparently become type reactions of the individual early in life. Studies of children between three and a half and four and a half years of age, made some years ago at the Institute of Child Welfare of the University of Minnesota, offer striking evidence of this. "The most significant fact which comes out of these observations is the fact that if we take a particular child and record his relationship to the group, we find that in 95 per cent of the situations with which he is presented in the play situation, he is the dominating or leading individual, whereas another child under the same conditions is found to be in the dominating or leading position only 5 per cent of the time."<sup>19</sup>

Concerning its importance as a social process, Ross has written aptly: "In the life of societies no phenomenon is more general, persistent, recurrent or frequent than domination. Not only has each social group brought adjacent social groups under its power so far as it could or dared, but each element within the group subjects other elements to its will so far as it can."<sup>20</sup> Employing a different terminology, Simmel indicates an equal recognition of its basic and extensive nature: "The most important form of relationship in the whole social world is the relationship between the leader and his followers, between the superior and his subordinates. It is a form of socialization without which no social life would be possible, and the main factor sustaining the unity of groups. Superiority and subordination constitute the sociological expression of psychological differences in human beings, and wherever these are associated, there they appear in a more or less pronounced form."<sup>21</sup>

Nine chief forms or types of domination are included in Ross' treatment of the subject. They are the domination of parents over offspring, old over young, husband over wife, men over women, the fighting portion of society over the industrial portion, the well situated over the ill situated, the strongest among allies over the rest, the conquerors

<sup>19</sup> John E. Anderson, "The Genesis of Social Reactions in the Young Child," in *The Unconscious: A Symposium*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York 1927, pp. 69-90.

<sup>20</sup> E. A. Ross, *Principles of Sociology*, D. Appleton-Century Company, Inc., New York, 1920, p. 121.

<sup>21</sup> Nicholas J. Spykman, *The Social Theory of Georg Simmel*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1925, p. 95. For an analysis from a slightly different point of view, see Herbert Goldhamer and Edward A. Skils, "Types of Power and Status," *American Journal of Sociology*, September, 1939, pp. 171-183.

over the conquered, and the masters of the state over the subjects of the state.<sup>22</sup>

Domination as a process rests upon some form or forms of authority. The means used to maintain ascendancy range, according to Ross, from pure coercion to something akin to partnership. They include physical force, political inequalities originating in the exercise of force, corruption, patronage, the political use of spiritual power, ignorance, and a sharing of the benefits from domination.<sup>23</sup> The purpose of domination obviously is exploitation, which in its larger aspects may be defined as the use of others for one's own purposes. Again, the most obvious form of exploitation is the economic, and this form is so generally emphasized that exploitation is ordinarily interpreted in the economic sense. But there are other forms of exploitation, such as sexual, religious, or egotistic. The last, the psychological aspect, has been emphasized particularly in studies made in recent years.

#### *Children and the Process of Domination.*

The history and problems of child welfare and of child status through the centuries need to be considered in relation to the background of larger social developments, and the process of domination, just described, seems to fit the facts remarkably well. Of the nine types enumerated above, two involve societal-child relationships, as far as male children are concerned; there are four in the case of female children. The relative lack of status of children over the years represents, then, a form of domination on the part of parents and elders similar in essence to other historic forms of domination, even if differing in details.

The bases upon which child domination rests are varied. Physical force suggests itself at once, and its use in the younger years is age old and constant. Early, however, it becomes entwined with institutionalized arrangements or ethical or religious ideas. Among many groups in tribal society, secret male societies are formed and utilized for this purpose. These societies are maintained by the elders, the young being admitted in slow stages, with attendant awe-inspiring ceremonies. Emphasis on filial piety as a duty is common to many societies and basic in various religions. The Commandment regarding child-parent relationships is the only one in our own Decalogue that promises a direct

<sup>22</sup> Ross, *op. cit.*, pp. 121-128.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 128-132.

and tangible reward. The system of ancestor worship has for centuries buttressed the authority of the Chinese parent.

The exploitation of children through the centuries is an established fact. A less brusque way of saying the same thing is the usual reference to children as being assets in former times. This exploitation was usually economic, and until yesterday it was all but universal. The temptation to exploitation was especially strong before the age of machinery and mechanical power. The children were used to do the simple, monotonous, repetitious tasks. The invention of machinery which performed such tasks quickly and cheaply has made its own distinct contributions to the emancipation of childhood.

But children have been and are exploited in ways other than economic. There is, as Ross has pointed out, exploitation that is psychological and emotional. Modern psychiatry has given us new appreciation of its extent, the subtlety of its forms, and the devious ramifications of its consequences. The ego dilates and glories in signs of abasement and devotion on the part of others. Many parents who would be shocked by any thought of exploiting their children in the economic sense do not hesitate at the psychological form. In fact, the small-family system, the lengthened period of infancy and the increasing importance of the family as a specialized personality relationship all combine to make this form of exploitation of possibly increasing rather than decreasing importance.

### *Revolt Against Domination.*

Interpretation of historic changes in occidental culture in recent centuries has utilized two phrases perhaps more frequently than any others. One is the decline of authority; the other, the rise of individualism. The former is as a rule critical and infrequently denunciatory in tone; the latter is eager, enthusiastic, and buoyant.

An objective description of the form, with special reference to its religious aspects, is the excellent statement made by Walter Lippmann.

The dissolution of the ancestral order is still under way, and much of our current controversy is between those who hope to stay the dissolution and those who would like to hasten it. The prime fact about modernity . . . is that it not merely denies the central ideas of our forefathers but dissolves the disposition to believe in them. The ancestral tradition still lives in many corners of the world. But it no longer represents for us, as it did for Dante and for St. Thomas Aquinas seven hundred years ago, the triumphant wisdom of the age. A child born in a modern city may still learn to use the

images of the theological drama, but more or less consciously he is made to feel that in using them he is not speaking of things that are literally and exactly true.<sup>24</sup>

The rise of individualism has been a favorite theme for many analysts in modern times. It has usually been praised as the objective and product of the long-drawn-out process of human liberation, whereby limiting hindrances have been stricken off one after another to permit each person the attainment of his fullest promise. The basic premise underlying all these discussions is that when and if external circumstances are favorable, the internal life of man will adjust itself successfully.

When these two trends of the past century are examined carefully, it is evident that they involve the same process, looked at from two fundamentally different points of view. To speak of the decline of authority assumes, as it were, the point of view of the dominator, whereas the rise of individualism assumes that of the dominated. The dominator, looking to authority for support, bemoans its decline; the dominated, seeking liberation to permit greater freedom and self-expression, revolts against it.

#### *Six Historic Revolts Against Domination.*

Once the basic importance and implications of domination as a social process are grasped, much of the history of modern times tends to fall into an over-all sociological pattern. It is suggested that there have been at least six outstanding phases of this process in the last four centuries which in their successive manifestations have constituted so many landmarks in the internal development of western culture, and which in their entirety have constituted the sum total of what liberal thought in recent times has termed progress. These are the religious, political, intellectual, economic, sex, and age aspects. It is our purpose to describe each of these briefly and to show that each has been fundamentally a revolt against some form or forms of authority which have buttressed some well-established age-old form of domination of a large segment of the population.

1. First is the religious aspect. This was a revolt against religious authority and it found expression in the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century. Its leader was Martin Luther, and the date which

<sup>24</sup> Walter Lippmann, *A Preface to Morals*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1929, p. 68.

may be taken as its formal beginning was the year 1517, when Luther nailed his 95 theses to the chapel door at Wittenberg. It is not accidental that this religious phase came first. Probably it had to appear first, because so many other forms of authority basic to other types of domination were intertwined with moral and religious considerations. From the point of view of our present discussion, the Protestant Reformation represented a direct frontal attack upon the center of the line; once that fell, the attending flanks could easily be turned. This is the most revolutionary aspect of the Reformation, that it denied the authoritarian claims of the most firmly entrenched of all institutional arrangements.

2. The political aspect is undoubtedly the most dramatic and for a century and a half has been regarded with the most favor, for this aspect is none other than the rise of modern democracy. This movement of revolt took form in the latter half of the eighteenth century and found its formal expression in the American Revolution of 1776 and the French Revolution of 1789. Its essence was the fact that it rejected the old conception of government as a divinely ordained institution imposed from above, and substituted for it the idea of a man-made institution which derived its consent from the governed and which existed for their welfare.

3. Less colorful but more quietly effective has been the intellectual phase of the revolt against authority. The concrete embodiment of this phase is to be found in the rise of modern science. Its origins go back for several centuries, but modern science may be said to have reached its maturity in the work of Charles Darwin, and the date of its coming of age was the publication of his *Origin of Species* in 1859. In its early stages and on its destructive side, modern science was essentially a revolt against dogma, against the settlement of questions on the basis of authoritarian statement. Its constructive side calls for an inductive approach and the acceptance only of the suzerainty of fact.

4. Meanwhile, the heady wine of revolt had been working in economic bottles. The economic aspect of the basic revolt which we are discussing is embodied in the labor movement. This term, as used here, does not mean or necessarily include any specific objectives of laboring groups or any particular methods of achieving them, but rather implies a broad social movement, developing during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, which offers a basic challenge to time-honored employer-employee relationships and principles of economic distribu-

tion. Thus conceived, it may be called the socialist movement by some, or even the rise of communism. A student of history may take the Communist Manifesto of 1848 as the event signaling its maturing and Karl Marx's *Das Kapital* as its Bible.

5. Sooner or later, the spirit of revolt against domination could not avoid expression on a sex basis. Despite notable exceptions, women through the ages have been a dominated group, with many forms of authority—biological, physical, economic, and moral-religious—supporting their lower status. The feminist movement of the past century crystallized and led the revolt against these age-old conditions.

6. That the child should be the "last serf of civilization" to be freed is not difficult to understand; and that the actuating forces and motives of these other forms of revolt should be extended finally to the field of childhood status must be equally apparent. The basic nature and some of the aspects of this change for children have been discussed in this and preceding chapters; from another perspective, the entire book is an expression of this change. What is emphasized here as the ultimate purpose of this analysis of domination and the revolts against it is that the child welfare movement must not be dismissed as a series of sentimental exercises undertaken by misty-minded utopians, or as a compensatory exercise for frustrated adults, but must be considered as a comprehensive social movement, taking its place along with other fundamental movements of modern times.

#### SUMMARY

1. There is a well-defined movement that is rapidly growing, whose object is the conscious promotion of the well-being of children. Every civilized nation has such a movement, although the details and objectives vary from one country to another. Child welfare work is one of the most extensive and expensive of our social welfare activities.

2. There are four types of child welfare activities: (a) those which are concerned with children in need of special care; (b) those which deal with needs and problems common to all children; (c) those directed toward helping children by means of more effective and intelligent parenthood; (d) those which are concerned with the larger social situations in which children must grow up.

3. These four types of activities have developed historically in the order in which they are listed in the preceding paragraph. The historical development of the movement involves its democratization, its



intensification, and its incorporation into the larger field of social welfare.

4. Many motives and interests combine to furnish the power which drives the machinery of this movement. Human motives are seldom as simple as they seem; their combination and integration in the child welfare movement are peculiarly intriguing.

5. The domination of children for purposes of exploitation has been a historic process, and the child welfare movement must be regarded as a phase of the revolt against this process.

## THE CONCEPT OF RIGHTS

<sup>1</sup> Charles E. Merriam, "Essential Human Rights," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, January, 1946, p. 11.

The best-known statement of human rights is the American Declaration of Independence. "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed." This statement, together with the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen (1789) marked the inauguration of the modern age and inspired the triumph of modern democracy.

Recent years have witnessed a resurgence of interest in the subject of human rights, and some notable attempts have been made to revise the historic formulations. These have been directed chiefly toward the inclusion of economic and social rights, on the basis of the claim that we are living in a new world in which the central problems arise from new pressures of power, production, and population which our forefathers did not face. The proposed new rights center about the development of personality, the basic implication being that there are certain social and economic rights which are as essential as the civil and political rights already established.

Several attempts to formulate these newer rights will be noted briefly. One was made by the United States National Resources Planning Board (1943). Nine rights were alleged, including the right to work; to fair pay; to adequate food, clothing, shelter, and medical care; to security; to live under a system of free enterprise; to come and go; to equality before the law; to education, and to rest, recreation, and adventure. Another attempt has been made by a committee of lawyers and political scientists, appointed by the American Law Institute and representing most of the principal cultures of the world. Their statement identifies eighteen essential human rights: freedom of religion, of opinion, of expression, of peaceful assembly, to form associations, the right to safety from wrongful interference, fair trial, freedom from arbitrary detention, retroactive laws, the right to own property, to education, to work, to reasonable conditions of work, adequate food and housing, social security, participation in government, and equal protection before the law as "limited by the rights of others and by the just requirements of the democratic state."<sup>2</sup> Finally, it should be noted that the United Nations Charter is committed formally to "universal

<sup>2</sup> Committee of American Law Institute, Report, "Statement of Essential Human Rights," *ibid.*, January, 1946, pp. 18-26.

respect for, and observance of, human rights," and to their implementation through an International Bill of Rights.

### *The Rights of Childhood.*

The concept of the rights of childhood is a product of the larger program of human rights. When first applied to children, the alleged rights were little more than claims which children were said to have upon the consideration of society, especially if that society was blessed with social feelings and intelligence. These rights might be spoken of as a series of ethical insinuations. Gradually, however, these claims found expression in organized efforts, first private and then public; in the "amiable purposes" of the philanthropically-minded; in the goals formulated by groups of professional workers; in the standards drawn up by official and quasi-official bodies, such as the White House Conferences; and finally, in legislative enactments.

It is often contended that these rights are not "true rights" and that they have no validity in scientific treatises or in government documents, at least not until they become the specific statement of some legislative act. To this Merriam replies as follows: "That rights have not yet been fully recognized or realized does not remove them from the field of the political, for politics deals with ideals as well as with realities. Ideals indeed are themselves realities. The rights of man provide the domain of faith and hope in government, the court of appeal which is never closed, the law beyond the law and the jurists, the lawmakers, the managers, and the adjudicators. The rights of man go deeper and higher than institutional devices for interpreting or applying them."<sup>3</sup>

To clarify the point of view in this volume, it will suffice to say that the rights of childhood are conceived of as social values in process of translation into the realities of daily living. This process may be said to begin with the crystallization of the ideas upon which these values rest; the course of its development includes many stages and forms of social expression; and each manifestation in its history is but another index of the changing status of childhood.

#### THE RIGHT TO LIFE

The basic right is the right to life. It involves the biological insistence for life expression, a social recognition of the eternal worth of the in-

<sup>3</sup> Merriam, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

dividual. It is primary to the development of all other rights, for these are merely subsequent devices which seek to give meaning to life. It seems proper, therefore, to begin a discussion of the emerging rights of childhood with the establishment of this primary one.

### *The Problem of Infant Mortality.*

Being a child has always been dangerous, and the earlier the stage in the life span, the greater is the hazard. In all cultures and throughout the centuries, the first year is the most crucial one. As late as a quarter of a century ago, a baby born in the United States had less chance to live a week than a person ninety years old, and less chance to live a year than an individual eighty years of age.

Precise information on the extent of infant wastage in preceding centuries is lacking, but the evidence that is available shows that it must have been enormous. Primitive methods of delivering and feeding children, recurrent plagues and famine, and the widespread practice of infanticide and exposure combined to eliminate large proportions of the baby crop among most peoples in past centuries. That all classes paid this price may be gathered from the fact that Queen Anne of England, who came to the throne in 1702, was the mother of seventeen children, only one of whom lived to be more than a year old. As late as 1761, half the English population died before reaching the age of twenty; in Prussia, during the decade 1751-1760, nearly seven-tenths of the children died before the age of ten. A writer in a French medical journal in 1780 stated that at that time half the children born in France died before the end of their second year; up to the end of the nineteenth century, not more than 36 per cent of the population reached the age of twenty.

These high death rates in the lower age brackets were only part of the larger mortality pattern. General death rates of 50 to 60 were not uncommon (in comparison with rates of 10 to 14 today). Ever-recurring plagues like smallpox cut scythe-like through the population, as did cholera, bubonic plague, yellow fever, and others. High rates of human wastage prevailed at all age levels. For both children and adults, they were accepted as an inescapable decree of Providence.

During the nineteenth century, the approach to disease was revolutionized. From about 1860 on, a series of fundamental discoveries were made which laid the foundations for a golden age in bacteriology. In

1860, Pasteur discovered germs in the air; in 1863, Davaine established germs as the cause of anthrax in cattle; in 1880, Eberth identified the bacillus that produces tuberculosis. As a result of these and other advances, the earlier fatalism regarding human mortality began to fade. Preventable death and disease became a stock phrase. Men began to accept Pasteur's statement, "It is within the power of man to rid himself of every parasitic disease." A world-wide war was declared on disease.

The results were immediate, as shown by the changed course of mortality rates. In the past half century, the death rate in Massachusetts, one of the first states to have reliable vital statistics, declined more than one-fourth; during the quarter century between 1881-1885 and 1906-

TABLE 17. Infant Mortality Rates, Selected Countries; 1883-1892 and 1893-1902

| COUNTRY           | 1883-1892 | 1893-1902 |
|-------------------|-----------|-----------|
| England and Wales | 144       | 152       |
| Scotland          | 120       | 127       |
| Denmark           | 135       | 133       |
| Russia            | 270       | 272       |
| Prussia           | 207       | 199       |
| France            | 167       | 158       |
| Chile             | 297       | 333       |

1910, the death rates of Finland, Norway, Sweden, and Scotland dropped about one-fifth; Austria, Belgium, Denmark, England, Hungary, Italy, and Switzerland, about one-fourth; Australia, Holland, and the twelve largest cities of the world, a third and more.

For several decades, however, these declines in the general death rate involved no corresponding changes in child mortality. Infant mortality rates—i.e., the number of infants who die before they are a year old per 1000 babies born alive—remained relatively stable in the latter part of the nineteenth century. In England and Wales, the infant mortality rate in 1899 was the same as in 1850; in London, it was five points higher; in France, it rose slightly, as it did also in Massachusetts. Comparative rates for the decades 1883-1892 and 1893-1902 for selected countries are shown in Table 17. Considered as a whole, this table reveals no gains in the conquest of infant mortality. At the turn of the century, from one-third to one-sixth of all babies born alive died before they were a year old.

*The Movement Against Infant Mortality.*

*Pioneer Gestures.* The exact beginnings of any social movement are difficult to determine because, wherever a serious social problem exists, there are a scattered few who see beyond the limitations of the present and seek to improve it. This is the case with infant mortality. In one sense, its origins go back to efforts to put an end to infanticide and the grosser forms of cruelty to children. Similarly, the Spartan procedures of the eighth century B.C.—exposing unfit babies and giving rigid training to those allowed to survive—can be viewed as an effective even if crude step forward in child hygiene. Soranus of Ephesus is often referred to as the first obstetrician and pediatrician; his medical book, written in the second century A.D., laid down for mothers a number of sound principles for child care, such as the importance of breast feeding, frequency of nursing, and regularity of feeding.<sup>4</sup>

An Englishman, John B. Davis (1780–1824), is usually identified as the founder of the modern child hygiene movement. His book, *A Cursory Inquiry into Some of the Principal Causes of Mortality Among Children, with a View to Assisting in Ameliorating the State of the Rising Generation in Health, Morals and Happiness* (London, 1817), shows an understanding both of the causes of infant mortality as identified by recent researches, and of the steps necessary to reduce it as shown by contemporary experience. His establishment of the first public dispensary and corps of home visitors was remarkably prophetic of modern systems of public health nursing for children.<sup>5</sup> The passage in England in 1836 of an act requiring the registration of births, deaths, and marriages, the establishment of the necessary administrative machinery, and the revisions of the Act of 1854 to make its requirements more effective may be interpreted as symbolic of changing conceptions of childhood. So also was the Infant Life Protection Act of 1872, which provided that a person could not receive for hire or reward more than one infant—or in the case of twins two infants—for maintenance apart from their parents for a period longer than twenty-four hours, except in a house which had been registered as a suitable place.

Meanwhile an important development occurred in France, the coun-

<sup>4</sup> John Rubrah, *Pediatrics of the Past*, Paul B. Hoeber, Inc., New York, 1925, pp. 4–8.

<sup>5</sup> Dinwiddie Courenay, "Child Hygiene," *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1930, p. 380.

try which, more than any other, witnessed the early beginnings of the "well-baby movement." In 1854, M. Morel, mayor of Villiers le Duc, began a baby-saving program which reduced the infant mortality rate of his village from 300 to 200. After his death the program lapsed; but in 1894 it was revived by his son and revised to include the reporting of all pregnancies, emphasis upon breast feeding, the weighing of every baby once a fortnight, compulsory reporting of each illness within twenty-four hours, provisions for periodic care of babies by physicians, and a community herd to supply clean milk for nursing mothers and children. This comprehensive plan is said to have virtually eliminated infant mortality in the area in which it was operative.

Other significant innovations were made in France. In 1876 a society was formed whose object was to aid mothers so that they might continue to nurse their babies, and which also disseminated knowledge as to the desirability of wet nursing. Under its influence France witnessed a widespread return to this old and venerable method of infant feeding. In 1892, Dr. Pierre Budin, a famous French pediatrician, moved by the high infant death rate among the poor, devised his well-known "Consultation de Nourissons" to provide education for mothers. This project involved, first, the encouragement of breast feeding as far as possible; second, provision for sterilized milk when necessary; third, the supplementing of the mother's milk with good cow's milk; and fourth, the systematic and periodic observation of each infant in order to note his progress. Another child-saving institution was the "goutte de lait," founded in 1894. Under this plan every child was given regular medical examinations and received specially modified cow's milk if artificial feeding was necessary. This type of agency proved to be particularly popular and spread extensively throughout France and the cities of western Europe.

Finally, reference should be made to the growing developments in the field of pediatrics. By the second half of the nineteenth century, Garrison points out, pediatrics was a going scientific concern; its rapid rise was complementary to the increased interest in children conceived as assets of the state.<sup>6</sup> In addition to that of the French leaders already referred to, there was the work of such men as Benjamin Broadbent in England, L. Emmet Holt in the United States, and others, who were developing a more scientific attitude toward child health problems as

<sup>6</sup> Fielding H. Garrison, in Foreword to Rubrah, *op. cit.*, p. xiii.



well as improved techniques which came gradually to revolutionize pediatric practice.

Thus toward the close of the nineteenth century, all the elements combined to create a situation in child health that made it ripe for large-scale advances. High rates of infant mortality persisted, despite marked reductions in the field of the communicable diseases, scientific attitudes were being developed, in regard to both child health problems and the value of children as social assets; and pioneers were emerging everywhere to show the way to possible achievements.

*Organized Developments in the United States.* From 1893, when the Strauss milk depots were established in New York City, until the passage of the Sheppard-Towner Act in 1921, there was a period of almost three decades during which the baby-saving movement in the United States emerged to achieve acceptance as a legitimate concern of national policy. The more important of the developments will be summarized briefly.

The first organized movement directed against infant mortality in the United States was initiated toward the close of the nineteenth century with measures for the improvement of the milk supply. These took a variety of forms.

1. The pasteurization of milk. This means heating it to 140 degrees Fahrenheit for twenty minutes, then chilling it below 50 degrees until used. When this is done by the best commercial methods available, it kills the harmful bacteria in milk without injuring it in other ways.

2. The production of raw milk under conditions which insure rigid, scientific, inspection of dairy, cows, and the care given to the milk. When milk is guaranteed to meet certain requirements of analysis and inspection, it is known as *certified milk*, a term which is legally protected in a number of states.

3. The production of modified milk to suit the needs of particular groups of children. This has been done since the establishment of the Walker-Gordon laboratory in Boston in 1891.

4. The establishment of milk depots, modeled after the type established in France. Although not the first one in the United States, the Strauss milk depots established in New York in 1893 gave great impetus to this particular movement. By 1910, there were similar stations in thirty of our cities; some of them operated the year round, but others, only during the hot summer months. At first these depots con-

fined their work chiefly to the sale of pasteurized and modified milk at less than cost, and were supported financially by private philanthropy. Gradually auxiliary programs grew up around them involving the establishment of baby clinics where infants were weighed and examined by physicians and trained nurses, diagnoses were made, treatment was prescribed, and mothers were instructed in baby care. In due course of time, these milk stations became infant welfare or, later, child health centers, and everywhere they were the local center of the campaign against infant mortality.

A second significant development consisted of the efforts to have women receive prenatal care. Such efforts began in the first decade of the century in the activities of private agencies in two cities. In 1908 the New York Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor, and in 1909 the Boston Women's Municipal League, initiated work of this kind. In 1918, the city of New York was districted and a maternity center established in each district to provide information to mothers, to coordinate and stimulate agencies to conduct clinics, and to refer patients for hospital care. By 1923, a survey of 100 cities made by the United States Public Health Service revealed that prenatal clinics were conducted in 73 of them. Surveys of the results of their work revealed striking proof of the reduction in infant mortality that resulted from this approach.<sup>7</sup>

The importance, in this connection, of the establishment of the Federal Children's Bureau in 1912 was great. Infant mortality was the first subject mentioned in the law creating the Bureau; and, since this problem seemed fundamental to the rest of its work, the Bureau made a series of outstanding studies of it in eight American cities. Not only did these studies serve as a model for the scientific study of the subject, but their conclusions revealed the nature and importance of the social and economic factors underlying the medical or terminal causes of infant deaths. So adequately was the role of these factors established that infant mortality came to be seen as a sensitive index of the socioeconomic life of a community, and its reduction as a challenge to community effort. But the Bureau did more than create insight into the fundamental factors upon which an effective scientific movement could be developed; as time went on, it contributed an effective leadership of it. Of particular significance also was the first large-scale extension by

<sup>7</sup> George B. Mangold, *Problems of Child Welfare*, The Macmillan Company, New York, rev. ed., 1924, pp. 109-112.

the Bureau of service to mothers and babies in rural areas. Its investigations into conditions of child life in rural areas made in 1916 became the basis for subsequent health programs for the rural child.

Much of the leadership and support of the movement against infant mortality in the earlier days came from private agencies and individuals. Outstanding among these was the American Association for the Study and Prevention of Infant Mortality, which was organized in 1909. Its aims included more complete registration of births and deaths, public education of mothers and expectant mothers in the care of infants, and the establishment of standards for milk which was sold under specific labels. The publication of its annual proceedings was an important contribution to the literature on infant hygiene. In 1923, this agency united with the Child Health Association to form the American Child Health Association, under the presidency of Herbert Hoover. The Association was active for a number of years; it promoted May Day as Child Health Day, furthered community organization, held conferences and loaned its personnel to assist in local campaigns, made research studies, including a survey of child health in 86 cities, and issued popular literature dealing with the development of new standards of health protection for children.

The establishment of the first city bureau of child hygiene in New York City in August, 1908, with Dr. S. Josephine Baker as its director, was a significant step forward in that it marked the advent of public leadership in a comprehensive, consecutive program on a local scale against infant mortality. In 1909, Detroit followed this example, as did Buffalo, Nashville, and Los Angeles in the following year. By 1920, child hygiene bureaus or divisions had been established in most of the larger cities and towns. Their functions have varied somewhat from place to place, but in general they have included the regulation and standardization of obstetrical procedure through the supervision of midwives and lying-in hospitals; the provision of nursing, medical, and dental services for infants, pregnant women, and preschool and school children; and instruction for mothers of children under one year of age.

These local developments were followed by the establishment of state child hygiene divisions. First among the states to do this were Louisiana in 1912, New York in 1914, and Kansas, Ohio, New Jersey, and Massachusetts in 1915. The period 1918 to 1920 saw a widespread development of the movement, with 23 states joining the procession. By 1920, a total of 34 states were organized to carry on child hygiene

work on a state-wide basis. The activities of these divisions included the making of surveys, the adoption of standards for child hygiene work, the standardization of legislation, the conduct of campaigns of popular education, the making of research studies, and coordination of the work of the local child hygiene divisions.<sup>8</sup>

Meanwhile, certain social changes were taking place which combined to lead many persons to accept the idea of child conservation as an essential part of our national policy. One was the decline in the birth rate, which many then regarded as an index of race suicide, and which led to the conclusion that its effects must be offset by a decline in the infant mortality rate. Second was the trend in all welfare work toward the ideal of prevention. With the growth of preventive medicine especially, emphasis in child welfare work shifted from remedial measures for sick and dependent children to those which aimed to secure the best home care for all children. Finally, there was the effect of the First World War, with its unparalleled destruction of life on the battlefield. As the various nations saw their young men cut down without issue, a new and pressing necessity for saving infant life became evident to them.

Local and state organizations, and the crystallization of widespread sentiment favoring child conservation, finally found expression and leadership in the activities of the federal government. The period of this leadership covers at the present writing (1947) a quarter of a century, and it has been implemented by three legislative enactments.

1. The Sheppard-Towner Act, passed in 1921 and to go into effect in April, 1922, provided for federal financial aid to the states, this aid to be matched in part by the states; the administration of this aid by the Children's Bureau acting through a federal board which also included the United States Public Health Service and the Commissioner of Education, the application of such aid to the reduction of maternal and infant mortality and the subsequent protection of the health of these groups; and the vesting of complete authority in the states to initiate and administer plans subject to the previously mentioned federal board. An annual appropriation of \$1,240,000 was authorized for five years in the original Act, and this was extended subsequently for two more years. These funds were apportioned in the following manner: (a) a direct grant of \$5000 per year to each state that accepted the pro-

<sup>8</sup> Anna E. Rude, "Status of State Bureaus of Child Hygiene," *American Journal of Public Health*, October, 1920.

visions of the Act; (b) another \$5000 to be granted each state if matched dollar for dollar, (c) a total of \$710,000 to be distributed to the states on the basis of population, if matched dollar for dollar. A sum not to exceed \$50,000 was allowed for federal administration. The maximum amounts available to each state ranged from \$10,522 for Nevada to \$80,042 for New York. At the expiration of the Act, all but three states—Connecticut, Illinois, and Massachusetts—had accepted its provisions wholly or in part.

Although the plans worked out in the various states differed somewhat, their basic emphases were similar. The general approach was educational, including instruction to individual parents at itinerant conferences or at permanent centers conducted by physicians and nurses; demonstrations in the home; instruction of groups through lectures, motion pictures, slides, and exhibits; classes in infant care for girls; graduate courses in obstetrics and pediatrics for physicians; and indirect instruction through the distribution of popular literature. Special efforts were made to reach rural mothers and babies. At the close of the seven-year period covered by the Act, 144,777 health conferences for expectant mothers and children had been conducted by physicians, and 2978 permanent prenatal and child health centers had been established.<sup>9</sup>

2. The Social Security Act of 1935 reestablished, in a somewhat changed form, the principle of federal aid and leadership in the field of infant and maternal health work, as developed originally by the Sheppard-Towner Act. It provided for annual appropriations of \$3,800,000, to be made in the following ways: (a) a total of \$1,020,000, in the form of \$20,000 to each state; (b) a total of \$1,800,000 for apportionment to the states on the basis of the proportion of live births in the state to all live births in the United States; (c) the remaining \$980,000 to be distributed to the states on the basis of need, special attention being paid to the needs of rural areas and of sections suffering from severe economic distress. The first two kinds of appropriations must be matched by state or state and local funds; the last need not be. To receive funds, the states must submit plans for maternal and child health activities, and these must be approved by the Chief of the Fed-

<sup>9</sup> Grace Abbott, "The Federal Government in Relation to Maternity and Infancy," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, September, 1930, pp. 92-101; *The Promotion of the Welfare and Hygiene of Maternity and Infancy*, Children's Bureau, U. S. Department of Labor, Publication No. 203, Government Printing Office, Washington, 1931.

eral Children's Bureau. Approval is given on the basis of the fulfillment of certain requirements laid down by the Act. Under amendments to the Act approved in August, 1939, the annual appropriation for maternal and child health services is increased from \$3,800,000 to \$5,820,000, of which \$3,840,000 must be matched by the states. The amendments also require that, after January 1, 1940, the state plans must provide for the establishment and maintenance of personnel standards on a merit basis. Under the provisions and resources of this Act, further cooperation of federal, state, and local agencies in the implementation of child conservation has been promoted in all forty-eight states, and in Hawaii, Alaska, and Puerto Rico.

3. The emergency maternity and infant care program is the third of these enactments. In 1941, the state of Washington, and in 1942 several other states, began to use federal funds to provide maternity care for the wives and medical care for the infants of men in the armed services. In March, 1943, there was established, by congressional appropriation, the emergency maternity and infant care program. This program has been administered by the Children's Bureau through grants to state health agencies for medical, nursing, and hospital care for wives and infants of enlisted men in the four lowest pay grades of the armed forces. The first appropriation, for 1943, was \$1,200,000; that for 1944 was \$29,700,000; and that for 1945 was \$42,800,000. The program was put into operation in all forty-eight states and three territories. The principles of care were as follows. Grants were made upon application of wife and physician. No statement of income or financial need was required. There were no state or local requirements. Complete maternity care was provided for wives during pregnancy, childbirth, and the postpartum period. This included prenatal care, delivery, treatment of any complications, medical examination about six weeks after confinement, and care of the baby for two weeks after birth. For babies under one year, medical, nursing, and hospital care was provided in case of illness, and also immunization against smallpox, diphtheria, and whooping cough. During 1946, the number of authorized cases reached the one-million mark.

*Some Achievements of the Movement.* It is difficult, and in many ways impossible, to measure the achievement of any movement so largely educational in character as that which has been directed against infant mortality. Certain summary accomplishments, however, seem clear and can be stated briefly.

First, the measures taken and the organizations established are of themselves indicative of the status which society ascribes to their objectives. Thus conceived, the foregoing summary of the movement, however brief and inadequate, seems sufficient to establish the widespread and official acceptance of the child's right to life as a basic social value.

Second, the type of organization and approach necessary to deal adequately with the problems involved has been determined and de-

TABLE 18. U. S. Infant Mortality Rates, 1900-1946<sup>10</sup>

|                |        |                |      |
|----------------|--------|----------------|------|
| 1900.. . . .   | .162.4 | 1930           | 64.6 |
| 1910 . . . . . | 131.8  | 1931. . . . .  | 61.6 |
| 1915 . . . . . | 99.9   | 1932. . . . .  | 57.6 |
| 1916. . . . .  | 101.0  | 1933. . . . .  | 58.1 |
| 1917. . . . .  | 93.8   | 1934 . . . . . | 60.1 |
| 1918. . . . .  | 100.9  | 1935. . . . .  | 55.7 |
| 1919 . . . . . | 86.6   | 1936 . . . . . | 57.1 |
| 1920 . . . . . | 85.8   | 1937 . . . . . | 54.4 |
| 1921 . . . . . | 75.6   | 1938. . . . .  | 51.0 |
| 1922 . . . . . | 76.2   | 1939 . . . . . | 48.0 |
| 1923 . . . . . | 77.1   | 1940 . . . . . | 47.0 |
| 1924 . . . . . | 70.8   | 1941. . . . .  | 45.3 |
| 1925 . . . . . | 71.7   | 1942 . . . . . | 40.4 |
| 1926 . . . . . | 73.3   | 1943. . . . .  | 40.4 |
| 1927 . . . . . | 64.6   | 1944 . . . . . | 39.8 |
| 1928 . . . . . | 68.7   | 1945 . . . . . | 37.6 |
| 1929. . . . .  | 67.6   | 1946 . . . . . | 35.1 |

veloped. A half century of application of the basic principles, and a quarter century of federal, state, and local cooperation in their effective promotion, have built up a vast fund of experience and a trained personnel which augur well for the future. Child hygiene work has become an established branch of public service.

Third, there is the objective measure of its achievements as indicated by the statistics on infant mortality. Table 18 shows the rates for 1900 and 1910, compiled from mortality statistics, and the annual rates since 1915, based on birth registration data compiled by the federal Census Bureau.

Considering these annual rates as presented, they reveal an amazing chapter in man's mastering of his world. The present rates are less than

<sup>10</sup> Forrest E. Linder and Robert D. Grove, *Vital Statistics Rates in the United States: 1900-1940*, Government Printing Office, Washington, 1943, p. 150; *Monthly Vital Statistics Bulletins* for rates since 1940.

one-fourth those prevailing at the turn of the century, and about two-fifths of those in 1915. One question, however, must be raised regarding these changes; it concerns the proportion of the gain that can be ascribed to the more complete registration of births. Infant mortality rates are based on the total number of births; and the registration of births in the United States, including the birth registration area, admittedly has been incomplete. There is some reason to suppose that birth registration has been less complete at times than the registration

TABLE 19. Infant Mortality Rates, Selected Countries and Years, 1915-1938

| COUNTRY                 | 1915 | 1920 | 1925 | 1930 | 1935<br>(1934) | 1938 |
|-------------------------|------|------|------|------|----------------|------|
| Austria                 | 218  | 157  | 119  | 103  | 92             | 83   |
| Chile                   | 254  | 263  | 258  | 234  | 251            | 236  |
| England and Wales       | 110  | 80   | 75   | 60   | 57             | 53   |
| Germany                 | 168  | 131  | 105  | 85   | 68             | 60   |
| Japan                   | 160  | 166  | 142  | 124  | 107            | 114  |
| New Zealand             | 50   | 51   | 40   | 34   | 32             | 36   |
| Switzerland             | 90   | 84   | 58   | 51   | 48             | 43   |
| U. S. Registration Area | 100  | 87   | 72   | 65   | 56             | 51   |

of infant deaths. If, then, birth registration has become more complete through the years, the mathematical results will show a corresponding decline in the infant mortality rate independent of changes in the actual proportion of infant deaths. The facts about this are not known sufficiently for any sound conclusions to be established, but the possible effects should not be overlooked.<sup>11</sup>

To complete this general survey of changing infant mortality rates in recent decades, the rates for certain countries are given by selected years in Table 19. While revealing striking differences in the rates of these countries, the table shows also that the decline of infant mortality has been marked in foreign countries. In some of these countries, as in England and Wales, Germany and Switzerland, both birth and infant death registration has been relatively complete, indicating that the striking gains in the reduction of infant mortality in the last three decades are primarily a social achievement and not the result of mathematical correction.

<sup>11</sup> Iwao Moriyama and Thomas N. E. Grenville, "The Effect of Changing Birth Rates upon Infant Mortality Tables," Bureau of the Census, Vital Statistics Special Reports, November, 1944, pp. 399-412.



*Eugenic Significance of Declining Infant Mortality Rates.* Some years ago, when infant mortality rates first began to show marked declines, there was considerable discussion concerning the eugenic significance of such changes. Although less has been said about this in recent years, the question is still pertinent.

The basic inquiry might be stated as follows: Does infant welfare work preserve the unfit? A generation ago, Karl Pearson and other biologists insisted that it did; and able sociologists, statisticians, and health officials came forward to support this view. In substance, their contentions were that infant mortality is selective, that the reduction of deaths during the first year of life simply creates increased problems in later years, that children kept alive by social efforts during the first year either will die in later childhood, or, if they survive, will marry and produce offspring who will in turn be weaklings. The attempt to conserve infant life is therefore merely a perennial and futile effort on the part of sentimental people to lift themselves by their own bootstraps.

One of these charges, that lower mortality rates during the first year of life lead to higher rates in the succeeding years, has been challenged by a number of scientists. Neusholme, Yule, Crum, Falk, and others, after examining the statistical evidence, either reject completely the Pearson indictment or fail to find incontrovertible evidence in support of it.<sup>12</sup> Falk's study emphasizes rather the reverse conclusion: "The saving of infant lives is followed by associated savings in the subsequent years of life. . . . Everything that has come out of our statistical studies tends to emphasize the validity of a dictum enunciated many years ago by Farr: 'In addition to the immediate accomplishment in life saving, infant welfare operates to preserve fitness by reducing the incidence of damaging but non-lethal sickness.'"<sup>13</sup>

On the other hand, little or no consideration has been given, except by implication, to Pearson's claim that the reduction of infant mortality through social efforts permits the survival of many persons of lesser innate competence. Such a view has been so contrary to the assumptions and mores, popular and scientific, of the past generation that there has been neither the disposition nor the verbal tools necessary to deal with it.

<sup>12</sup> For a summary of conclusions and a bibliography, consult Frederick Crum, "The Effect of Infant Mortality on the After-Lifetime of Survivors," *Annual Proceedings*, American Child Hygiene Association, 1920, pp. 177-193.

<sup>13</sup> I. S. Falk, "Does Infant Welfare Work Operate to Preserve the Unfit?" *American Journal of Public Health*, February, 1927, pp. 142-147.

## THE RIGHT TO BE WANTED

Birth and death are two parts of one social process, and the establishment of the requirements of one inevitably raises the problem of corresponding needs for the other. The right of a child to be born under socially adequate circumstances seems as fundamental as the right of survival; in fact, it might easily be interpreted as of prior importance. Obviously, a child can have no say about his own birth, except as an after-the-fact reminder of what should have motivated his procreation. His right to be wanted, which may be taken as the first need in the protection of his birth, turns therefore into problems of the disposition, opportunity, and right of his parents to control and plan the introduction of his life into the social aggregate. In discussing the emergence and status of this right, we need to consider, first, certain facts about the birth rate, and second, the course of man's efforts to control the circumstances of his reproduction.

*Changing Birth Rates.*

*Birth Rates Defined.* The simplest way to relate births to the population is to compute the birth rate. This is done usually in two ways. The first is to determine the number of births per 1000 population per year. This is known as the crude birth rate. Ordinarily, when reference is made to the birth rate without any qualifying remark, the crude birth rate is meant. The second method of computing the birth rate is to determine the number of births per year per 1000 women of child-bearing age. The age span customarily used is 15 to 44, or 15 to 49, inclusive. This is generally spoken of as the refined birth rate. It is, of course, the most desirable one to use. Unfortunately, its determination requires a knowledge of the age distribution of the female population, and this obviously is available only for the years in which such statistics were gathered.

*Historic Birth Rates.* What the birth rate was during the long years of man's history is largely unknown. Vital statistics are a device of modern times, and in their absence one has only the husks of speculation to feed upon. To judge by the past wasting of life through high mortality rates, the growth of the population in various parts of the world could have been achieved only by a very high birth rate. Where and when the population was stationary, as in medieval Europe, birth rates had to be high merely to balance the heavy toll of life at all age levels.

The maximum birth rate in a normally constituted population is at least 45 per 1000, and it may reach a high point of 50. Marked deviations in the sex and age structure of the population, or in the prevailing age of marriage, can affect these figures correspondingly. Rates ranging in the forties prevailed in various European countries during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Kuczynski, who assembled and analyzed the available data, points out the following facts: For the Greek Orthodox population of the Russian Empire, for the years

TABLE 20. Birth Rates in Western and Northern Europe, 1841-1928<sup>14</sup>

| PERIOD          | BIRTH<br>RATE | PERIOD          | BIRTH<br>RATE |
|-----------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------|
| 1841-45. .. .   | 31.9          | 1896-1900 ..... | 29.4          |
| 1846-50. . . .  | 30.9          | 1901-05 . . . . | 28.4          |
| 1851-55. .. .   | 30.8          | 1906-10 .....   | 26.6          |
| 1856-60 .....   | 31.7          | 1911-14 . . . . | 24.2          |
| 1861-65 ... .   | 32.1          | 1915-19 .. . .  | 17.0          |
| 1866-70 .....   | 32.0          | 1920-21 .....   | 23.8          |
| 1871-75 .....   | 32.7          | 1922-23 .....   | 21.0          |
| 1876-80 . . . . | 32.8          | 1924-25 ... .   | 19.9          |
| 1881-85 .. .    | 31.4          | 1926 . . . .    | 19.2          |
| 1886-90 . . .   | 30.2          | 1927.. . . .    | 18.2          |
| 1891-95 .....   | 29.7          | 1928..... ..    | 18.3          |

1801-1866, the birth rate averaged 47.7. For European Russia proper, for 1867-1913, it was never lower than 43, and averaged 48.9 for the entire period.<sup>14</sup> During the twenty-five years preceding the Balkan Wars, the birth rate for both Bulgaria and Rumania averaged 41; for Austria, from 1819 to 1902, it averaged 40; for Hungary from 1871 to 1897, it averaged 43.<sup>15</sup> To judge by the best information available, similar rates obtained in the United States until the nineteenth century. Such rates clearly indicate reproduction on the level of natural physiological capacity.

Rates in northern and western Europe, which is the only major part of the world for which we have accurate birth data over an extended period of time, show some fluctuation between 1750 and 1815; they turned downward slightly during the next twenty-five years, and then, for the area as a whole, remained high until almost the close of the nineteenth century. Table 20 reveals the degree of change after 1840.

<sup>14</sup> Robert R. Kuczynski, *The Balance of Births and Deaths*, New York, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1928, vol ii, p. 8.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 31-48.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, vol i, p. 9.

*The Decline of the Birth Rate.* The decline of the birth rate, as far as western culture is concerned, began to manifest itself in the latter half of the nineteenth century. It was in France that noticeable changes first occurred, to some extent after 1830 and more particularly after 1850. Similar tendencies can be noticed after 1880 in England and Wales, as well as in some countries on the Continent. The changes became more marked and extensive after the turn of the century. As shown in Table 20, the rate for northern and western Europe dropped definitely below 28 after 1905 and below 25 in 1911. By the outbreak of the First World War, the birth rate was declining throughout Eu-

TABLE 21. Birth Rates, Selected Countries, 1938

| COUNTRY                 | BIRTH<br>RATE | COUNTRY         | BIRTH<br>RATE |
|-------------------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Belgium . .             | 15.6          | Hungary.        | 19.5          |
| Bulgaria . . . .        | 24.4          | Italy . .       | 23.6          |
| Canada . . . .          | 19.8          | Japan . .       | 26.7          |
| Chile . . . .           | 33.6          | Norway . .      | 15.8          |
| Egypt . . . .           | 43.6          | Poland . .      | 29.6          |
| England and Wales . . . | 15.1          | Rumania . . . . | 30.6          |
| Finland . . . .         | 20.0          | Russia . . . .  | 43.8 (1930)   |
| France . . . .          | 14.6          | Sweden . .      | 14.9          |
| Germany . . . .         | 19.7          | United States   | 17.9          |

rope, with the exception of Russia and Bulgaria. The war years showed a marked decline, with some recovery for several years afterward, because of the many marriages postponed by the war. By 1924, the long term trend downward reasserted itself. Table 21 shows the extent to which the decline had gone by 1938, the last full year of peace before World War II.

Birth rates for the United States are not available for the period prior to 1915, when the federal Bureau of the Census established the birth registration area.<sup>17</sup> Two substitutes are commonly used: (1) the number of children under the age of five per 1000 women of child-bearing age (15-49 years), and (2) the average size of the family as revealed in successive census years. Table 22 combines these two groups of data; both of them reveal a trend similar in kind and degree to that shown in Europe.

<sup>17</sup> For a brief summary of efforts to approximate a birth rate for the United States prior to 1915, consult Walter F. Willcox, *Studies in American Demography*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1940, chap. 17.

TABLE 22. Number of Children, Five Years of Age and Under, per 1000 Women of Childbearing Age, and the Average Size of the Family, 1860-1940

| YEAR | NUMBER OF CHILDREN | CHANGE IN 10 YEARS | AVERAGE SIZE OF FAMILY |
|------|--------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| 1860 | 634                |                    | 5.3                    |
| 1870 | 572                | -62                | 5.1                    |
| 1880 | 559                | -13                | 5.0                    |
| 1890 | 485                | -64                | 4.9                    |
| 1900 | 474                | -11                | 4.7                    |
| 1910 | 445                | -29                | 4.5                    |
| 1920 | 422                | -23                | 4.3                    |
| 1930 | 350                | -72                | 4.01                   |
| 1940 | 292                | -58                | 3.78                   |

As previously indicated, annual birth rates are available for the United States since 1915. These are confined to the birth registration area which began in 1915 and covered only ten states, but grew steadily in scope until in 1933, when the last state was admitted to the area. The rates for selected years are presented in Table 23, which shows a steady and marked decline to 1933, the depth of the depression; a slight recovery, perhaps under the stimulus of New Deal spending policies; and more marked increases during the war years. It may be anticipated that, after 1946, the long-term trend downward will be resumed.

TABLE 23 Annual Birth Rates, U. S. Registration Area, Selected Years, 1915-1945

| YEAR   | RATE | YEAR | RATE |
|--------|------|------|------|
| 1915   | 25.0 | 1940 | 17.9 |
| 1920   | 23.9 | 1941 | 18.9 |
| 1925   | 21.5 | 1942 | 21.0 |
| 1930   | 18.9 | 1943 | 23.0 |
| 1933   | 16.6 | 1944 | 22.2 |
| 1935.. | 16.9 | 1945 | 21.6 |

Lorimer has shown the differences in the time and extent of the decline on state and regional bases. Beginning in the more industrialized portions of the Northeast early in the nineteenth century, it reached a relatively high stage of development in the New England states by the close of that century; declines became apparent in the South Atlantic and Gulf states after 1900, although the birth rates there have remained

well above the average. Rural states and those with large foreign populations have shown relatively small declines up to the present time.<sup>18</sup>

*A Matter of Conscious Limitation.* Many factors, some physical and others cultural, have been advanced in explanation of the declining birth rate. Whatever the respective role of any of these, there is general agreement that the decline represents a conscious and deliberate limitation of the number of children by parents in order to control the circumstances and conditions of family life as affected by the number of its child members. Apparently, there has been no appreciable increase in the number of childless marriages, but rather an extension of the small-family system. The custom of standardizing the size of the family, so common in France, has been spreading in the United States. Manifesting itself originally at the upper-class levels, the practice has been penetrating into the lower classes.

The volitional nature of this movement is highly significant, for it calls attention to the motives which influence parents to limit the number of their offspring, to the means they use to achieve this purpose, and to the opportunities they have to learn and evaluate the effectiveness of available methods. The factors and problems involved are not new; in some form or other they have appeared in every stage of man's history. It is pertinent therefore to survey briefly some outstanding features in the history of the birth control movement.

#### MAN'S EFFORTS TO CONTROL FERTILITY

##### *The Universality of These Efforts.*

A good deal has been said in the past about man's concern with sterility, but relatively little, until recently, about his corresponding interest in avoiding excessive reproduction. Both of these must be viewed in perspective as two aspects of a fundamental desire to control fertility.

Such a desire apparently is universal and age-old. Himes, whose monumental researches in this field are well known, writes that his studies show "that men and women have always longed for both fertility and sterility, each at its appointed time and in its chosen circumstances. This has been a universal aim, whether people have always been conscious of it or not." And again, "Contraception has

<sup>18</sup> Frank Lorimer, "Factors Influencing Ratios of Children to Native-White Women in the United States, 1900 and 1930," *Milbank Memorial Fund Quarterly*, July, 1933, pp. 15 ff.

existed in some form throughout the entire range of social evolution, that is, for at least several thousand years. The desire for, as distinct from the achievement of, reliable contraception has been characteristic of many societies widely removed in time and place. Moreover, this desire for controlled reproduction characterizes even those societies dominated by mores and religious codes demanding that people 'increase and multiply.'<sup>19</sup>

The fundamental motivation underlying all the desires and efforts to control fertility is the adaptation of the number of children to the circumstances of life. These efforts constitute accommodation phenomena. Thus conceived, within this movement must be included all the efforts to control fertility, ranging from total abstinence from sexual relations to the most refined contraceptive techniques. The desire to control fertility may be thought of as the basic fact; the techniques utilized, as the means to that end. Birth control methods, then, are not the primary cause of controlled reproduction; they are the secondary and subsequent result of it. As such, they vary with the type of culture and the amount of available knowledge.

### *Historic Efforts.*

A wide variety of methods for controlling fertility have prevailed among primitive groups, both historic and contemporary. Mere mention of them must suffice. Infanticide, which is after-the-fact control, has been widely practiced; female infanticide has been especially prevalent. Abortion seems universal and frequent, by means of either bodily violence or internal concoctions. In primitive society, infanticide and abortion are the chief substitutes for control of conception. Most of the methods used are preventive, in that they seek control through the prevention of conception. These include celibacy, postponement of marriage, coitus interruptus, coitus reservatus, prolonged periods of nursing, belief in and observance of an infertile period, symbolic magic, sex perversions, abstention from intercourse, and castration. The prohibition of sexual relations between spouses over extended periods is well-nigh universal among primitive peoples. Chief among its forms are the taboo following childbirth, which may be in force as long as four years.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Norman E. Himes, *Medical History of Contraception*, The Williams & Wilkins Company, Baltimore, 1936, p. xii.

<sup>20</sup> For a detailed account of these methods, see *ibid.*, pp. 3-59; Raymond Firth, *We, the Tikopia*, American Book Company, New York, 1936, chap. 12, 14.

*From Preliterate to Modern Times.*

In his *Medical History of Contraception*, Himes has gathered data on contraceptive techniques in the days of antiquity (for western nations), during the Middle Ages in eastern cultures, and in early modern times, which seem to warrant the following three conclusions: First, throughout these centuries and in all historic cultures, the idea of contraception has been known and accepted, much more so than is commonly supposed. Second, the techniques known, as compared to modern ones, were generally crude and had some reliance upon magic. Noteworthy exceptions existed, however. Thus two Irish physicians, Soranos and Aetios, carried the idea of contraception to a high degree of medical development, giving it a definite place in preventive medicine. Himes calls Soranos' treatment of technique the most brilliant until very late in modern times. Third, the use of such techniques was not widely diffused among the population. Especially limited was their practice during the Middle Ages, which constituted the era of greatest dominance by the Church. During this period particularly, the popular mores—economic, social, and religious—favored large families, and the prevailing high death rates prevented them from becoming too much of a problem.

*Nineteenth-Century Developments.*

Western culture entered the nineteenth century with high birth rates and relatively little knowledge or use of contraception. A hundred years later, both circumstances were in process of rapid change. The decline of the birth rate has already been discussed; three of the related developments will be given brief description here. First, the nineteenth century witnessed a marked improvement in the techniques of contraception and in their effectiveness, particularly after 1870. The most widely used device was invented in 1880. Over 200 mechanical devices are now used in western culture, in addition to chemical and other agents. The effectiveness of these methods has been shown in the research studies of Pearl<sup>21</sup> and of Stix and Notestein.<sup>22</sup>

The second development has been the widespread diffusion and democratization of contraceptive knowledge. One aspect of this was the appearance of a considerable medical literature on the subject. Another

<sup>21</sup> Raymond Pearl, *The Natural History of Population*, New York, Oxford University Press, New York, 1939, chap. 4.

<sup>22</sup> Regina K. Stix and Frank W. Notestein, "Effectiveness of Birth Control," *Milbank Memorial Fund Quarterly*, January, 1934, pp. 57-68.



took the form of the widespread distribution of tracts furnishing contraceptive information. Other methods of agitation and education of the people were utilized. The result was not only the considerable diffusion of such knowledge at upper-class levels and among groups which had always been interested, but also its widespread penetration into the lower classes. Himes has called this the most important new phase of the movement during the nineteenth century.<sup>23</sup>

This process of diffusion has not been easy, as will appear from a brief reference to the treatment accorded to the pioneers in it. This can best be seen in England, where formally organized agitation in its behalf appeared with the work of Francis Place about 1822. In addition to publishing his scientific advocacy of the principle of birth control, he appears to have written and sponsored the so-called *Diabolical Handbills* of 1823, which set forth the evils of large families, together with certain contraceptive information to prevent them. The name given the handbills and their anonymous authorship are indicative.<sup>24</sup>

The most important and influential tract of the century was *The Fruits of Philosophy*, written by Dr. Charles Knowlton, a physician, and first published anonymously in New York City in 1832 and reprinted in England in 1834. The author was fined and jailed, but his pamphlet continued to circulate. In 1877, it became the basis of the famous Bradlaugh-Besant trial in England, the charge being the sale of the Knowlton tract. The chief effects of this prosecution were the sale of several hundred thousand copies of it; a decided stimulus to the demand for contraceptive devices; the organization of the Malthusian League in 1877 by the leading British advocates of the movement; and, in due course of time, the organization of leagues for propagandist purposes in a number of other countries—Holland (1885), Germany (1889), France (1895), and Bohemia (1901), among others. Similar legal tussles in other countries, including Belgium, France, India, and Australia, served to stimulate further interest.

The third development was the rise of cultural pressures favoring the limitation of family size. Particularly outstanding has been the stress upon its social and economic desirability. Such considerations scarcely antedate the nineteenth century, but by its close they assumed a position of prior importance. The factors involved are characteristic

<sup>23</sup> Himes, *op. cit.*, p. 210, and chap. 12, 13.

<sup>24</sup> For an excellent short summary of developments since 1800, the reader is referred to Frank Hankins, "Birth Control," *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, vol. II, pp. 559-564.

of our contemporary culture, and four of them are singled out for brief comment.

1. The modern industrialization process has created an economic system which has resulted in economic insecurity for many of its workers. The threat of unemployment and irregular employment have been widespread; the hazards of accident and sickness in a cash economy have been serious. In other words, the maintenance of a large family in our industrial culture has become much more precarious than under the older handicraft or agricultural system.

2. The value of a child to his parents has changed enormously within the past century. Formerly, the child, measured in economic terms, was an asset. His early and certain introduction to employment, often in his own family, resulted in his maintaining himself and being a source of income to his parents over a long period. Our contemporary industrial-urban pattern has changed all that. City life offers few opportunities for early and gradual employment. Industry eliminates the opportunities for homework. Child labor laws establish age limits for entering gainful occupations, and compulsory school requirements supplement these non-employment factors. As a result, the child is today an economic liability to his parents, and definitely so, rather than an asset as formerly. There is reason to believe, as Karl Pearson suggested a number of years ago, that the effects of compulsory school and child labor legislation upon the birth rate are immediate and direct.

3. A relatively open class system is an important even if intangible factor. In any country where a considerable number of persons believe that they can raise their status by their own efforts, prudence combines with ambition to lead many families to seek to limit their size. Moreover, the competition in an open class system presses heavily upon those who wish merely to retain their status, so they too seek to plan the number of those they must maintain. The social democratic movement, the democratization of opportunity, rising and standardized planes of living—these are but so many phrases to describe the same basic process.

4. The status of women and their conception of their role in life has changed greatly during the past century. In former times, the chief or one of their chief functions was to serve as a breeding machine. "Everything in woman is a riddle," said the philosopher Nietzsche, "and the answer to the riddle is childbearing." In recent decades many factors have revolutionized the status of women—education, employment op-

portunities, changing functions of the family, etc. This changed status has expressed itself nowhere more than in sex attitudes and behavior. The modern woman refuses to have her sex exploited. She has definite and often precise ideas concerning the number of children she will have, and the space that shall separate their births. In some cases, she is unwilling to accept even the birth of one child as the price of sex experience. Like the male, she insists that sex shall be a positive and contributing force in her development, not service rendered by a chattel. Significantly enough, modern methods of contraception are chiefly utilized by the woman rather than the man.

### *Developments in the United States.*

It seems natural that any movement for the control of fertility should develop late in the United States. Its early settlement by Europeans steeped in medieval mores, the strong Biblical and religious traditions of the various colonizing groups, the open spaces and vast resources of a virgin continent calling for exploitation, the loneliness of life on the advancing frontier, all predisposed many people against any active interest in contraception as a social cause. Relatively little is known about propagandist activities during the nineteenth century, but there is ample evidence that the English tracts were known and circulated here. The birth limitation practices of the Oneida Community have interesting implications for the future historian of the birth control movement.

Efforts to fix the legal status of contraceptive propaganda have been of two kinds. One has been a general attempt to identify such activities as obscene and therefore as coming under the general obscenity acts. Since many countries have no specific laws against contraceptive activities, its enemies have usually been responsible for such efforts. The other effort has been through legislation specifically directed against contraception. The best known of this legislation was the enactment by Congress in 1873 of Section 211 of the Penal Code. Passed largely as the result of the activities of a Mr. Anthony Comstock, this legislation sought primarily to prevent the transmission of pornographic publications through the mails, and included under this category was any printed matter, drug, or device designed for contraception. It made no distinction between the lewd and the scientific and did not exempt the medical profession. Subsequently a large number of states passed legislation of a similar nature, but there was considerable

variety in the activities which were forbidden either by specific mention or by general implication. About half the states, however, imposed restrictions on the sale and advertisement of materials and information. One state, Connecticut, prohibits the use of contraceptives. From a historical perspective, we cannot be sure how much of this legislation involved a conscious effort to restrict the availability of contraceptive information for married couples and how much of it resulted from the passive acceptance by legislators of the naiveté of a moral zealot. Certainly the tone and primary purpose of the Comstock legislation were far different from the direct restrictive measures of the Mussolini government in Italy in 1925.

The modern movement in the United States to legitimize the limiting of conception through scientific and hygienic methods and to educate the adult public as to its advantages from the personal and social point of view, has been known by a variety of terms. Originally the British term "Neo-Malthusianism" was used. The French spoke of "conscious generation" and voluntary parenthood. Birth control has been the most widely used American term, but today the official term is planned parenthood. Its history in this country has at least four well-defined periods and principal emphases.

The first period covered the years from 1914 to 1921. Its dominant theme was militant agitation and publicity. In 1914 Mrs. Margaret Sanger, a public health nurse, was arrested in New York City for the distribution of her pamphlet, *Family Limitation*. Considerable public support rallied to her cause. In 1915, the National Birth Control League, initiated by Mrs. Sanger, was reorganized, and branches subsequently were established in various cities and states. In 1919 the Voluntary Parenthood League was formed, with Mrs. Mary Ware Dennett as president, to agitate for the modification of federal laws. In 1921 the American Birth Control League was organized. Since 1917, a monthly journal known as *The Birth Control Review* has been published. Police interference with birth control meetings and activities characterized this period, as did the rapid crystallization of popular support for the movement.

Mrs. Sanger has identified the years 1921 to 1925 as the period during which the organization of the movement was furthered. Local and state leagues were formed as part of the national organization. There was a determined drive to educate public opinion and to seek changes in the laws which classed contraception with obscenity and

criminal abortion. In 1923 the first successful birth control clinic in America was established.<sup>25</sup> Active in the background was a tremendous interest in population studies as a result of the First World War. In 1922 Mrs. Sanger toured the world in the interests of the movement. The same year in London, and in 1925 in New York, international Neo-Malthusian conferences were held.

From 1925 to 1937 may be identified as the third period during which the advocates of the movement concentrated upon the establishment of clinics; enlistment of the active interest of physicians, biologists, and social scientists; and popular support for efforts to remove restrictive legislation. By the end of the third decade of the century, 34 clinics were functioning in the United States; by the end of 1937, the total was 374. Of these, 170 clinics, reporting for 1937, showed a total of 30,178 patients. The onset of the depression and its impact upon the economic circumstances of millions of families focused attention on problems of limitation in the average family. Popular support of the movement grew rapidly during these years. Public opinion polls during the depression decade showed that even the most conservative segments of the population indicated an approval of birth control by votes ranging from 65 to 79 per cent.<sup>26</sup> At the close of this third period occurred two developments of signal importance for the movement. First, in November, 1936, the U. S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit upheld a lower court, in *U. S. vs. One Package*, by declaring that the Comstock law of 1873 should not be interpreted to "prevent importation, sale or carriage by mail of things which might intelligently be employed by conscientious and competent physicians for the purposes of saving life or promoting the well-being of their patients." This decision virtually handed physicians their bill of rights in the practice of their profession. The second development was the decision on June 8, 1937, by the American Medical Association that birth control was a legitimate part of the medical practice.

Since 1937, the movement has definitely come of age. In addition to past emphases, some of the larger implications of planned parenthood have been stressed, with a view to its integration with various other social efforts. Chief among these have been its relation to preventive

<sup>25</sup> Margaret Sanger, *My Fight for Birth Control*, Farrar & Rinehart, New York, 1931.

<sup>26</sup> Polls were conducted by *Farm and Fireside* (1930), *The Churchman* (1935), *Forum* (1935), *Fortune* (1936), American Institute of Public Opinion (1936), *Ladies Home Journal* (1938).

medicine and public health work, to marriage counseling and marital adjustment, to the large-scale influx of married women into gainful occupations, to relief programs, and to many of the problems of child care and child behavior.

### *Present Status.*

Indicative of the present status of the movement for planned parenthood, the following brief summaries are presented:

*Legal Aspects.* Federal court decisions during the 1930's, as already shown, removed the application of federal legal restrictions to physicians in their practice of medicine. As far as state legislation is concerned, 19 states have no statutes whatever that mention birth control. In 27 other states, existing legislation relates to such matters as the display and advertising of contraceptive devices, but does not relate to physicians. Two states, Connecticut and Massachusetts, have laws which the courts have construed as forbidding physicians from giving contraceptive advice to patients.

*Medical Aspects.* In addition to the action of the American Medical Association in 1937, the following medical associations have passed resolutions in favor of birth control: Section on Obstetrics, Gynecology and Abdominal Surgery of the American Medical Association; American Gynecological Association; American Neurological Association; American Medical Women's National Association; National Committee on Maternal Health; Arizona State Public Health Association; Florida State Public Health Association; state boards of health (Delaware, North Carolina, and South Carolina); and state medical societies (including Alabama, Arizona, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Iowa, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and West Virginia). In 1946, the Committee on Public Relations of the New York Academy of Medicine called upon private physicians, hospitals, medical schools, and public health services to assume responsibility for providing patients with contraceptive advice when medically justified.

*Public Health Aspects.* The Planned Parenthood Federation and its affiliates constitute the fifth largest voluntary health group in the United States. In seven states, the spacing of pregnancy by planned parenthood is a regular part of the state's health program for maternal and child care.

*Popular Aspects.* In 1940, the Gallup poll showed that 77 per cent

of the adult American public favored birth control information for married people who want it, to be given by government public health clinics. Another public opinion poll in *Fortune* for August, 1943, showed that 84.9 per cent of American women, aged 21 to 35, favored making such information available to all married women. This position was supported by 69 per cent of the Catholic women voting.

### *Aspects of the Contemporary Controversy.*

Despite appreciable gains during the past three decades, the acceptance of planned parenthood as an integral part of the nation's health and welfare program is not yet complete. The controversy regarding its use continues, albeit in lessened degree and in changing forms. In recent years, the advocates of planned parenthood, representing about four-fifths of the population according to recent polls, have stressed chiefly its role in the field of health and social welfare. Many of their claims seem clear and will be summarized briefly.

(1) With childbirth and conditions associated with it the chief remaining cause of infant mortality and the third highest cause of death in the country, child spacing and planned pregnancies are indispensable in the further promotion of child hygiene. (2) Child labor, compulsory school attendance, and other standards of child rearing being what they are, the cost of bringing up a child to the age when he can legally become self-supporting amounts to about \$10,000 for the average wage-earning family. All our families should, and self-respecting families will, give careful attention to the number of such obligations they will assume; society's underwriting of these social standards through its various social agencies creates social interest in the quality of the parents who assume these obligations. (3) When half of the married women in many areas engage in gainful occupations outside their home, the timing of wanted pregnancies and attempts to terminate unwanted ones become a serious problem to the families, industries, and society involved. (4) In many rural or isolated areas, the possibility of medical care during confinement depends upon the season of the year; this again emphasizes the importance of the timing of conception. (5) Happiness in marriage is based among other things upon satisfactory sex relationships, and these seem impossible without the elimination of the disorganizing effects of the dread fear of unwanted pregnancy. The importance of this factor depends upon the wife's susceptibility to impregnation. (6) In a rapidly changing society,

with its attendant insecurities, the adjustment of the size of the family to its aspirations and its economic circumstances is a reasonable demand. (7) The right of a married couple to determine the number of children they wish to have seems natural and inherent. (8) Students of the behavior problems of children emphasize the varied effects on them of growing up in a family in which they are not wanted. Women who want the children they have are better mothers, as well as better wives. (9) From the standpoint of society, the control of the birth rate, and its adjustment in relation to the death rate, is as important to the maintenance of international peace as any other factor, including the atomic bomb. (10) In religious terms, if human life is immortal, the bringing of a human being into the world is too important and sacred a thing ever to happen, except as the conscious choice of fully responsible persons.

Opposition to planned parenthood emanates from four main sources: first, from certain conservative elements who, either from modesty or from reluctance to accept new ideas, deny the propriety of its public discussion; second, from militaristically-minded persons who think in terms of the relative numbers, and military potentials, of selected nations; third, from certain business interests who view population policies in terms of markets and units of labor supply; and fourth, from certain religious groups. It is from the last that the chief opposition in this country has come; and among them the Roman Catholic Church, claiming from one-fifth to one-sixth of the population in its nominal membership, is easily the most important. Special reference should be made therefore to the basis of its opposition.

The hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church has long been outspoken against any form of family limitation, but the encyclical of Pope Pius XI (December, 1930) placed the subject beyond further controversy for all believing Catholics.<sup>27</sup> After declaring the divinely ordained, sacramental, and indissoluble nature of matrimony and its blessings and benefits, the letter turns to the vices opposed to it. Among these, first consideration is given to the avoidance of offspring

<sup>27</sup> For a presentation of the Catholic point of view, see John M. Cooper, "Birth Control," 1923; Leo J. Latz, *The Rhythm of Sterility and Fertility in Women*, Latz Foundation, Chicago, 1932; Edward R. Moore, "The Case Against Birth Control," 1931; and "On Christian Marriage, A Complete Official Text of the Recent Encyclical Letter of Pope Pius XI," *The Catholic Mind*, January 22, 1931.



not through virtuous continence (which Christian law permits in matrimony when both parties consent) but by frustrating the marriage act. . . . No reason, however grave, may be put forward by which anything intrinsically against nature may become conformable to nature and morally good. Since, therefore, the conjugal act is destined primarily by nature for the begetting of children, those who in exercising it deliberately frustrate its natural power and purpose sin against nature and commit a deed which is shameful and intrinsically vicious. . . . Holy Mother Church very well understands and clearly appreciates all that is said regarding the health of the mother and the danger to her life; and who would not grieve to think of these things; who is not filled with the greatest admiration when he sees a mother risking her life with heroic fortitude, that she may preserve the life of the offspring she has conceived? God alone, all bountiful and all merciful as He is, can reward her for the fulfillment of the office allotted to her by nature, and will assuredly repay her in a measure full to overflowing. . . . We are deeply touched by the sufferings of those parents who, in extreme want, experience great difficulty in rearing their children. However, they should take care lest the calamitous state of their external affairs should be the occasion for a much more calamitous error. No difficulty can arise that justifies the putting aside of the law of God which forbids all acts intrinsically evil.<sup>28</sup>

Catholic spokesmen add, however, that they do not necessarily oppose family limitation, because they approve abstention and restriction of intercourse to the mid-menstrual period. The idea of the rhythm, or a safe period, dates from Soranus in the second century A.D. Recently Drs. Knaus (Prague) and Ogino (Japan) have shown that there is some confirmation of a safe period for some women in relation to their time of ovulation. The Roman Catholic Church has declared rhythm to be a natural method, acceptable in accordance with its dogma. Proponents of planned parenthood have seized upon this, pointing out that Catholics now accept the principle of planned parenthood and differ from non-Catholics only in the methods approved.

Reference to the views of one religious body on planned parenthood calls for a summary of those of other church bodies. (1) Perhaps the best measure of Protestant opinion on the subject is the report of the Commission on Marriage and the Home of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, which holds that "careful and restrained use of contraceptives by married people is valid and moral." This position is justified on the grounds that "it is important to provide for the proper spacing of children, the control of the size of the

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 37-40.

family, and the protection of mothers and children; and because intercourse between the mates, when an expression of their spiritual union and affection, is right in itself." (2) The prevailing sentiment of reformed Jews is favorable, as was indicated as early as 1929 by the adoption by the Central Conference of American Rabbis of the report of the Commission on Social Justice which recommended the use of birth control in coping with social problems. (3) During the year 1946, a resolution approving planned parenthood was signed by 3200 Protestant and Jewish clergymen. Because of its outspoken character and definite approval, part of it is reproduced here:

Whereas, minority religious opposition to the planning of parenthood, through the use of medically approved methods of birth control, frequently prevents boards of hospitals, nursing and welfare agencies from recognizing this essential service, and

Whereas, lack of favorable policies by such boards keeps millions of married couples from obtaining proper guidance in the planning of families from those very sources in the community which should be expected first to assist them, and

Whereas, under such circumstances, many couples are compelled without professional guidance to seek the aid of drug stores and other purely commercial outlets for assistance in planning their families, often with undesirable and deleterious results, and

Whereas, failure of community services to provide proper counselling and service in planning parenthood at all times constitutes a peril to health and the general welfare, be it therefore

Resolved, that Protestant and Jewish clergymen, throughout the country, believing in the right of each child to be born well and wanted by its parents, be requested to exercise a fundamental democratic right and seek the inclusion of planned parenthood services in hospitals and other agencies where this service should be given, and be it further

Resolved, that favorable policies be sought to permit professional staff members in other health and welfare agencies to make use of these services as a community health resource.

### *Significance for Child Status.*

The significance of family limitation and the declining birth rate is usually considered in relation to the growth of the population. However, attention here is directed to its meaning for child status. Four aspects of this will be noted. (1) The declining birth rate involves the small-family system, and this in many ways changes the nature of family life and family problems. Various aspects of this have been pointed out in preceding chapters of this book. Whatever these de-

velopments and our evaluation of any particular one of them, there seems no reason to doubt that the small-family system, through the greater advantages and opportunities for children which it makes possible, has made for higher standards of child care and development. Because individual parents have been able to do more for their own children, they have been willing to accept higher standards for all children, thus raising the status of children as a population element. (2) Reinforcing the family's ability to care more adequately for fewer children have been the increased abilities of modern societies to maintain higher standards of child care for all children. In part this has been the result of modern economic advance, but in substantial part it has resulted from the lessened percentage of the population in the child age groups caused by the declining birth rate. A decline in the percentage of the population under 15 years of age, from 39.2 in 1870 to 25.0 in 1940, with resultant increases in the percentage of those in the productive age brackets, has much to do, as was pointed out in Chapter XXIV, with the changing status of childhood. With fewer children and more producing adults, society can do more for its child members. (3) Planned parenthood and smaller families, together with lower infant mortality rates, combine to form a pattern of reproduction which makes for a high evaluation of child life. The older method—easy-come, easy-go—was wasteful mathematically and in every other way. It rested upon a low valuation of the individual child's life—"They come, they go; what is one child more or less?" Underlying the present pattern of reproduction is a wholly different concept of child life. Fewer children are born, more must survive. This makes for more intensive care, and a higher scale of values. (4) Little has been said, but much might be, about the effect upon status of the recognition of the child's right to be wanted. What has been said in this connection is that the acceptance or rejection of the child determines his subsequent basic relationship to his world. The family, it is pointed out, is the world into which the child is born; for some years it is his only world; and it is during these years that his primary attitudes toward the world are formed. All this is highly significant. One cannot but speculate on what it would mean if every human being in the world had been wanted and had had the consciousness of being wanted, of having grown up in a family in which he had been fully accepted; where his coming had not been hailed as the rationalization of a *fait accompli*, but where he had been wanted before pregnancy had occurred, and

his conception had come in answer to a fundamental and intense yearning of both parents.

What is emphasized here goes one step further, to point out that the acceptance of the child's right to be wanted involves the attitude of his world to him. This means a new value for the child, a new dignity of human life, a new level of reproduction, and the complete acceptance of the implications of man's immortality. To some, the great leaders of the future are those who will be preoccupied not with the economic and political demands of the masses, but with the intangibles of life whereby they have their being and, albeit, reproduce their kind. The means used to accomplish this end—clinic, rhythm, abstinence, etc.—seem rather incidental from this point of view.

#### CONTRASTING RIGHTS AND THE CULTURE LAG CONCEPT

The development of the child's right to life and the right to be wanted have been traced at sufficient length, it is hoped, to make clear the difference in the degree of their acceptance. This difference becomes all the more striking when we recall that birth and death are complementary phases of the life process. Contemporary society in the United States accepts in relatively full measure the child's right to live, once he has been born, and goes far in its efforts to translate that right into reality. In fact, infant mortality has been eliminated almost entirely, except for the causes surrounding the process of birth. Despite these facts, similarly complete and effective consideration of the child's rights to be wanted and to be well born, which are antecedent in time and possibly in importance, has thus far been given only in part and in the face of the opposition of a strongly entrenched minority group. Here, it would seem, is another situation which illustrates the culture lag theory, i.e., the failure of one phase of a cultural change to keep up with another closely related change. The reduction of infant mortality to its present low levels calls for an adaptive fecundity as far as both the problem of population growth as a whole and the processes of child development are concerned.

#### SUMMARY

1. Recent years have witnessed notable attempts to revise historic formulations of human rights. These have been directed chiefly toward

the inclusion of economic and social rights, especially those centering about the development of personality.

2. Emphasis upon the rights of childhood is a phase of this larger program. Originally put forward as mere claims which children were said to have upon the consideration of society, they may now be regarded as social values in process of receiving full acceptance.

3. The child's right to life is a primary right which has been rather fully established in the United States during the past few decades. Beginning at a time when one-fourth of all babies died before they were a year old, first private individuals and groups, and then public agencies, directed their efforts to the problem. Today, about one out of every 25 infants dies during the first year; and federal, state, and local public agencies are cooperating to maintain and still further reduce the present rates.

4. The child's right to be wanted would seem to be a complementary social right, since birth and death are two parts of one social process. This right is in process of development, and has had only partial acceptance. Nineteenth-century legislation and the determined opposition of the Roman Catholic Church have retarded its spread, so that its attainment lags behind the acceptance of the child's right to life.

[illegible]

## DIFFERENCES IN THE SOCIAL ACCEPTANCE OF THE RIGHTS OF CHILDHOOD

The right to an education which prepares the child for life is perhaps the most completely established and accepted of all the rights accorded American children. Its development has been an integral part of our

national history. While it had its beginning in the transplanting of English practices and systems, its subsequent unfolding came in answer to ideas and needs peculiar to the New World. For a long time, religious interest in the establishment of public education was paramount. Protestantism by its very nature tended to promote freedom of speech and thought; and the religious controversies of the post-Reformation period placed a premium upon the acquisition of intellectual tools which prepared the individual for participation in them. Learning, in other words, was prized so that men might read the Bible and acquire religious instruction. Denominational indoctrination characterized all education. Throughout the colonial and early national periods in our history, the sectarian and religious were the controlling motives in the establishment of education.

Following the Revolutionary War, the idea grew that the continuity and welfare of the new republic depended upon the enlightenment of its people, and that the nation must educate its youth as a duty to itself. By 1830, this idea had come to be widely accepted, and it became the task of the next generation (1830-1860) to develop the framework of a comprehensive public school system. "These thirty years," writes Mulhern, "saw the struggle for free public schools fought and won, and the right to support and control education vested in the people."<sup>1</sup> Tax-supported free schools were authorized by law as follows: Massachusetts, 1827, Delaware, 1829; Vermont, 1850; Ohio, 1853; Iowa, 1858; New York, 1867, Rhode Island, 1868; Connecticut, 1868; Michigan, 1869, and New Jersey, 1870. In Pennsylvania, school districts were permitted by a law of 1834 to establish free public schools, and in 1849 that permission changed to a requirement, although it was not until 1886 that all districts complied with the law. By 1900, the period of pioneering in public education was over, for it was required in nearly all states outside of the South. In the majority of the states, the age of compulsory attendance ranged from eight to fourteen years. The minimum length of the school year varied from eight weeks to eight months.

Various statistical summaries of the public education situation in the United States can be utilized to show the completeness with which the child's right to an education has been accepted. One is the age to which school attendance is required. For the forty-eight states and the District of Columbia, the ages established by law in 1940 varied from fourteen to eighteen years, with two states placing the minimum at fourteen,

<sup>1</sup> James Mulhern, *A History of Education*, The Ronald Press Company, New York, 1946, p. 472.

two at fifteen, twenty-nine at sixteen, ten at seventeen, and six at eighteen. Another index is the length of the school term. The school year 1943-1944 was fixed by one state at from 140 to 149.9 days, two states at 150 to 159.9 days, nine states at from 160 to 169.9, twenty-four states at from 170 to 179.9, and twelve at 180 days or over. Third, and particularly significant, are the data on enrollment. In the last year

TABLE 24. Public High-School Enrollment, Selected Years, 1890-1940

| YEAR      | TOTAL ENROLLMENT    |
|-----------|---------------------|
| 1889-1890 | 200,000 (estimated) |
| 1909-1910 | 915,061             |
| 1919-1920 | 2,200,389           |
| 1929-1930 | 4,399,422           |
| 1939-1940 | 6,601,444           |

before World War II, 1939-1940, a total of 25,433,542 children were enrolled in public day schools. The ratio of enrollment to the number of children five to seventeen years was 85.3. To this must be added the

TABLE 25. Enrollment in Institutions of Higher Learning, 1890-1940<sup>3</sup>

| YEAR | ENROLLMENT | PERCENTAGE OF<br>POPULATION<br>18-21, INCLUSIVE |
|------|------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| 1890 | 156,756    | 3.04                                            |
| 1900 | 237,592    | 4.01                                            |
| 1910 | 355,213    | 4.84                                            |
| 1920 | 597,880    | 8.14                                            |
| 1930 | 1,100,737  | 12.37                                           |
| 1940 | 1,494,203  | 15.42                                           |

enrollment in non-public elementary and secondary schools which for that year, amounted to almost three million more.<sup>2</sup>

Special significance is attached to two other groups of data. One has to do with the rapid increase in the number of students enrolled in high schools. Table 24 shows the totals for selected years.

Equally striking is the increase in the enrollment of students in institutions of higher learning. Table 25 presents this for selected years in the period 1890 to 1940.

<sup>2</sup> These statistics are taken from "Statistics of State School Systems, 1943-1944," and "Statistics of Non-Public Elementary and Secondary Schools, 1940-1941," *Biennial Surveys of Education in the United States*.

<sup>3</sup> "Statistics of Higher Education, 1939-1940 and 1941-1942," *Biennial Survey of Education in the United States*, vol. ii, chap. 4, p. 4.



*The School Child's Right to Health.*

The child's right to health may be said to be on the road to public acceptance. Compared with developments in public education, those in the field of child health make an unsatisfactory showing in large areas of this country; but when contrasted with the child health work of two or more generations ago, the advances made in recent years are striking. Two developments in the latter half of the nineteenth century in particular focused attention upon this aspect of child development. One was the evolution of public health work to the stage where the economy of the preventive approach was recognized. Once this approach was made, it was quickly seen that all the diseases which, from the point of view of medicine or public health, were known to be preventable, occurred in the early part of life; that to prevent disease, the beginnings must be made in the age span when it can be prevented; that if the individual's resistance was to be utilized to fight disease, this resistance must be built up in the years of childhood; and that if health education was to be made an effective instrument in public health work, the foundations for it had to be laid in the years when persons were most educable. These ideas, now seemingly so simple and obvious, were hailed in this earlier period with all the enthusiasm given a new discovery.<sup>4</sup>

The second early development that focused attention upon the basic importance of child health was the gathering of the children into the schools. As the dragnet of compulsory attendance brought more and more of them into the schools, and for longer periods of time, a number of problems with strong health implications came to be recognized. One was the necessity of safeguarding, from a health standpoint, the school buildings to which the children went. This problem of school sanitation was, as a matter of fact, the original compelling force in the development of school health work in several countries in Europe. Another problem involved the infections that were spread by contacts among the school children. This presented the direct danger of disease epidemics, and pointed to the obvious necessity of control measures. Another problem, which was recognized more slowly, was the importance of health for education. As the school year lengthened, as the number of years of required schooling increased, as the scope and standards of instruction were raised, schoolmen became increasingly concerned with the large number of children who could not keep step

<sup>4</sup> S. Josephine Baker, *Child Hygiene*, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1925.

with their companions. In the search for causes, removable physical defects and other health conditions were recognized as an important factor. Gradually, the sound body and the sound mind came to be seen as inseparable aspects of the individual child, which meant of course that an educational program that ignored the children's health was doomed to at least partial failure. Finally, too, it came to be realized that the school environment and school pressures created health problems which it was society's simple and obvious duty to remedy, through the agency of the school. Small wonder, therefore, that the school has come to be recognized as the principal agency in the promotion of child health programs.

Supplementing the discussion of child health in the preceding chapter, reference to the public acceptance of the child's right to health is confined here to health programs for the school child. Isolated beginnings of the school's interest in child health go back for more than a century to France where, in 1833, the school authorities were made responsible for the sanitary conditions of the school premises and for supervising the health of the children. The following year, there was a school doctor for every boys' school in Paris. The term school physician was first used in Sweden in 1867, when medical officers were placed on the staff of each school. Other pioneer gestures were made in several German cities in 1867, in Austria in 1873, and in Brussels in 1874.

Health work in the schools of the United States began in the last decade of the nineteenth century. Boston is usually credited with being the first city to establish this work, following a series of epidemics among school children in 1894, but it seems that some health work was initiated in the schools of Elmira, New York, as early as 1872. Chicago began its work in the schools in 1895, Philadelphia in 1896, and New York City in 1898. The first state law relating to medical inspection was passed in Connecticut in 1899; it required teachers to test the eyesight of each pupil every three years. The first school nurses were employed in New York in 1902. Eye, ear, and throat examinations were made compulsory in Vermont in 1904. In 1906 Massachusetts adopted a law requiring vision and hearing tests.<sup>5</sup> The American School Hygiene Association was organized in 1907. By 1910, a survey made by the Russell Sage Foundation showed a total of 337 cities with school medical inspection, and a personnel of 1194 physicians, 371 nurses, and

<sup>5</sup> Thomas D. Wood and H. G. Rowell, *Health Supervision and Medical Inspection of Schools*, W. B. Saunders Company, Philadelphia, 1927.

48 dentists. By 1911, nineteen states had provided for medical inspection in schools.<sup>6</sup> By way of general summary, it may be said that prior to the outbreak of the First World War, the idea of public responsibility for the health of school children had been accepted by leaders in the field of both public health and public education.

The years since World War I have witnessed the gradual extension both in the scope of the work in more advanced areas and in its establishment in some degree in other areas. Because of the war as such, and because of the economic readjustments which followed it, the period from 1914 to 1926 was one of atypical progress, according to Wood and Rowell,<sup>7</sup> except that the data revealed by the medical examination of draftees served to focus attention upon the need for a comprehensive public health program. A survey of 86 cities made in 1923 by the Research Division of the American Child Health Association revealed that although each city was carrying on an organized effort to better the health of children, the amount on the average was not over half of what could be expected with a reasonable program. Sixty-nine of the cities provided medical service in the schools, but the examinations were superficial; in 35 cities, less than two minutes were devoted to each child.<sup>8</sup>

Data on child health gathered for the third White House Conference again called attention to the necessity for more effective health work in the schools,<sup>9</sup> but budgetary limitations beginning in 1929 and extending during the depression decade proved to be a serious handicap. Distinct advances were made, however; and considering the period between the two World Wars as a whole, the school health program took definite form along five main lines:

*School Sanitation.* School sanitation implies the provision of safe and healthful conditions in the school plant. It is recognized as of basic importance, both as a direct requirement for health and as an object lesson. It is ironic at best to teach cleanliness in unclean schools, or conservation of sight in an ill-lighted school room.

*Health Service.* Health service seeks actively and directly to pro-

<sup>6</sup> *Social Work Year Book*, 1929, Russell Sage Foundation, New York, 1930, p. 397.

<sup>7</sup> Wood and Rowell, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

<sup>8</sup> *A Health Survey of 86 Cities*, The American Child Health Association, New York, 1925, pp. iii, xiv.

<sup>9</sup> *White House Conference*, 1930, D. Appleton-Century Company, Inc., New York, 1930, pp. 167-169.

mote the health of the school child. The conception of what this involves has changed completely in recent decades. Earlier, the purpose of health service in the schools was primarily to prevent the spread of communicable diseases, with an eye to protecting the community as well as the school children. It was developed as a legitimate exercise of the police power of the state, and was based on the same principle as quarantine laws, the establishment of pesthouses, and compulsory vaccination. Today, its chief purpose is to discover defects and physical abnormalities, and to promote measures directed at their removal to the end of securing and maintaining the health and vitality of the individual child. Such health work is now developed not as an exercise of the police power of the state but as a phase of its educational and social welfare program. The development of this program has involved the extensive use of school nurses; the maintenance of various types of school clinics, such as dental, eye, orthopedic, psychological, and nutrition clinics; and the development of various types of special classes for handicapped children. One of the chief problems in the furtherance of school health services is to secure the interest and cooperation of the parents of the children.

*Health Education.* Health education is concerned with imparting knowledge about how to preserve and promote health. In many states, instruction in the effects of the use of alcohol and narcotics is especially enjoyed. In more progressive school systems, the emphasis is upon health habits and healthful patterns of living.

*Mental Hygiene.* Childhood is the golden age for mental hygiene, and mental hygiene, like other aspects of health, involves essentially a way of living and of adjusting to other persons. This conception of mental health, and the approach to it during the child's school life and through the instrumentality of the school, seem so obvious that its recent recognition in school health work is particularly conspicuous. A beginning, but perhaps only that, has been made in this aspect of child health work in the schools.

*Physical Education.* The term physical education was formerly used to include all forms of health instruction but has come to be applied more specifically to instruction in the activities of the gymnasium and playground. Requirements for this type of instruction are rather general, particularly in city school systems, but the nature and degree of its integration with the rest of the school work vary a great deal.

Prior to the outbreak of the Second World War, the situation in re-

gard to health work in the schools, as indicated by the legal requirements of the respective states, was somewhat as follows: All but one state require instruction in the effects of alcohol and narcotics, a requirement which in recent years has been interpreted as applying to elementary schools. Forty states have made legal provision for health services in their schools, but there is considerable variety in the details of administration and provision. In twenty states the law requires or suggests the annual examination of all school children; in ten states a general physical examination is specified. In the majority of the states, examinations are to be conducted by physicians; in the others, by nurses or teachers. The exclusion from school of children with communicable diseases is general, and vaccination against smallpox is a general requirement. Inoculation against diphtheria has been emphasized in recent years. In many high schools today the tuberculin test for tubercular infection is now available for all. Thirty-seven states have laws requiring the board of education to make provision for physical education, and eleven states require the teaching of safety in the public schools. It is obvious, on the basis of the foregoing, that large gaps still exist in so far as state requirements are concerned; and careful students agree that thus far, outside of urban districts, the health program for school children is far from adequate.

### *The Lag in Complementary Social Movements.*

In the preceding chapter, social movements involved in closely related rights of childhood were summarized and compared. In the one case, the child's right to life and his right to be wanted were considered, the differential in their public acceptance was noted, and its interpretation in terms of cultural lag was advanced. The contrast in the present chapter is even more suggestive in this connection. The child's right to an education is fully accepted, and its implementation in a public program is reasonably complete. On the other hand, although most children between five and seventeen years of age now spend a considerable part of each of these years in a prescribed school environment, a complementary responsibility for the health of the school child, whose right to life is now so amply guaranteed, is recognized only in limited measure. Here, even more than in the preceding chapter, we see a differential in two social movements involving the child in closely related aspects of his development.

The existence of such differentials or lags is highly important when

one considers present-day processes and trends in social development. With the decline in the older functions of the family and the parallel rise in the scope of public activities and responsibilities in child development, more and more aspects of the child's life are parceled out to specialized social agencies. Just as the secondary group organization of our contemporary society involves parceling out the personality to many groups rather than to just one or a few, so in the promotion of the contemporary child's development and well-being responsibility is distributed more and more to specialized agencies, instead of being confined to one or a few.

To find wide differentials in the extent to which these specialized agencies are accepting their newly assigned and assumed responsibilities becomes a significant problem in modern child development. From it emerges the threat of unbalanced development, a lack of integration of program which, in accordance with the sociological theory of personality, means a lack of integration in the child's developing personality. Lags in selected aspects of child development become particularly significant when we consider the child as a whole, rather than in terms of a series of specialized aspects which fit the convenience of the various professional groups that deal with him. Considerations of this kind suggest as a goal for the social agencies and programs devoted to child development the importance of their coordination within a range of reasonable variation, to the end that a balanced background for a balanced personality may be achieved. It is the development of the child as a whole that should serve as the polar star.

#### THE PROBLEM OF FINANCIAL LIMITATION

A second outstanding problem involved in contemporary social programs for child development arises from the stubborn realities of financial limitations. Four recent trends combine to create this problem in its present urgent form. The first is the steady advances in virtually all fields of science. Such advances have been particularly phenomenal in the so-called life sciences. One result of them has been to open up almost endless vistas of human and social betterment. In virtually all the sciences that touch human life, there are available new insights and revealed possibilities which, if utilized and achieved, are almost boundless in their scope. Modern man, surveying the insights which scientists now give him, believes that he is only on the threshold of a new world which may be achieved through his own efforts.

Supplementing the insights and vistas for human development offered by the life sciences is the increasing emphasis upon the intensive treatment of the individual. This is often identified as the case method approach, and when applied to humans is defined as the differential treatment of the human personality. Its essential aim is to understand and deal with each case on the basis of its own distinctive aspects. The idea, to be sure, is not new. Five hundred years before the Christian era, Hippocrates, the father of medicine, made a series of case records of individual patients which have remained virtually without parallel to this day. What is novel about the case method today is the scope and intensity of its application in various aspects of human development.

A third related development is the increasing appearance of pressure and promoting forces in the social welfare field, and this includes child welfare. These forces stem from various sources: the vested interests of specialized jobholders eager to achieve occupational security and future promotions; the designs of go-getting, promoting types of welfare executives; the socially ambitious, who find welfare work a helpful avenue to social preferment and public esteem; and the politically astute, who promise all things to all strongly organized and vocal groups. Not all promoter types are occupied in the field of corporation finance; the social welfare field has its own featured individuals in these respects, and the child welfare phase of the work has been a particularly felicitous hunting ground for them.

Finally, there is in the background the rising level of public indebtedness. Many of the social welfare programs—particularly those aimed at child welfare—which are accepted as the minimum requirements of today, first took form or attained public recognition a generation ago, under belief in a supposed surplus of social income which could be utilized by persons interested in various forms of social improvement. Speaking of the advances of the nineteen-twenties, Murphy wrote: "We had money enough to do things for people, to get things for people, to introduce new baby carriages into neighborhoods where they had never been seen before. The whole nation had a kind of release from repressions; anybody who wanted a job could get one; everybody had money; married women could get work."<sup>10</sup> What careful students of finance now understand is that this supposed surplus was in reality fictitious,

<sup>10</sup> J. Prentice Murphy, "Certain Philosophical Contributions to Children's Case Work," *Annual Proceedings, National Conference of Social Work*, 1933, p. 77.

resulting from the financial discounting of the future in ways and to an extent which produced the economic crash of 1929 and the depression decade that followed.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, this discounting of the future through public borrowing has been continued, and on a scale unparalleled in human history, down to the year 1946. Some data on the increasing federal public debt will reveal the extent to which this discounting of the future has gone. In 1900, the debt of the federal government was 1.2 billion dollars; in 1932, it stood at 19.4 billion dollars. Following this, the New Deal policy of seeking prosperity through lavish public expenditures was put into operation. By 1937, the federal debt amounted to 36.5 billions. Then came the huge expenditures of the war period, until in February, 1946, the federal debt reached its all-time high of 279 billions. In addition to this there are the public indebtednesses of the respective states, some of which reach large amounts; the debts of our cities, the interest payments on which in some cases now require virtually half their annual budgets; and the debts of private business, as expressed in their respective bond issues. Some years ago, Helton wrote of this practice: "For ninety dollars, at the present market (1932), one may purchase the promise of a great American railroad that the great-grandchildren of the present stockholders will pay one thousand dollars in gold in the year 2000 A.D." Another case is an issue of "4 per cent railroad bonds on which the principal sum of fifty million dollars will become due for payment in the year 2361." The laying of certain transoceanic cables out of New York was financed by an "issue of first mortgage bonds redeemable on the first of January five hundred years hence."<sup>12</sup>

These huge debts, public and private, represent discounts or anticipation of future income which has been utilized for present expenditures. In modest and restricted amounts to facilitate the development of sound and long-range improvements, and when limited in period of time to a single generation, the process of discounting the future presents no appreciable hardship. Our present indebtednesses, however, have gone far beyond this point. Especially significant is the changed debt structure of the federal government. Annual interest charges on the national debt alone amount at the present writing to about five billion dollars a year, which is more than the total peacetime expendi-

<sup>11</sup> James H. S. Bossard, *Social Change and Social Problems*, Harper & Brothers, New York, rev. ed., 1938, pp. 268-272.

<sup>12</sup> Roy Helton, "Sold Out to the Future," *Harper's Magazine*, July, 1932, pp. 137, 138.



tion of the family income which, until recently, financed many of the opportunities afforded to American children beyond those available to children in other lands. Our present standards of child care and education pose a relatively heavy financial obligation upon parents, and their maintenance over the period of the next generation at least constitutes a financial problem which many careful thinkers are considering with gravity.

#### THE PROPER CONCERN FOR CHILD DEVELOPMENT

The final problem which this volume presents involves the proper balance of adult concern for child development. How much should we do for our children? How much should we permit, and compel, them to do for themselves?

Two contrasting philosophies can readily be identified in the literature and discussions of recent years. One emphasizes the overwhelming responsibility of parents and society. Children are what we make them. They cannot be more, they dare not be less. Wise and adequate parenthood requires that parents assume the responsibility for child development, creating the necessary opportunities for their children to grow into healthy and happy adults. Wise statesmanship, through the public provision of the requisite conditions, seeks to supplement parental efforts in the controlled development of the next generation. The major responsibility for child development lies with parents and the larger society.

The opposite point of view is rather critical of this emphasis; it contends that too much concern has been shown for children in our contemporary society, that modern parents tend to pamper rather than discipline them, that society gives them too much and expects too little, and that proper child development calls for more emphasis upon child self-help. Adult life, it insists, is grim and hard, and adequate preparation for it dares not partake too much of the soft, the easy, and the effeminate. To show the broad front of this "harder" approach to the problems of child development, four comments regarding it will be presented. They were made by a psychiatrist, a Washington columnist, a former educator and journalist, and a sociologist, respectively.

The psychiatrist is Dr. E. A. Strecker, who served as special consultant to the Secretary of War and to Surgeons General of the Army and Navy in World War II. Emphasizing the fact that 1,825,000 men were rejected for military service in that war, that another 600,000 were

discharged from the Army alone for neuropsychiatric reasons or their equivalent, and that another half million attempted to evade the draft, Dr. Strecker attributes the basic inability of these three groups out of fifteen million persons to their immaturity, i.e., to the fact that they had not grown up. This condition, he points out, is in turn the result in large measure of parental domination, of oversolicitous "moms," of lack of child weaning—in short, of the failure of parents to allow or compel their children to grow up. This one-fifth of the manhood of America failed to measure up to their country's crisis because their parents, particularly their mothers, did too much for them, and too long.<sup>14</sup>

The Washington columnist is Paul Mallon. He has made similar and recurrent criticisms of progressive education, its philosophy and implications. He has contended in his column, which is read by millions of people, that recent years have constituted an ease era in which the approach to juvenile delinquency has been to "let them eat cake" literally, and in which the typical program for child development calls for more money for more facilities, for boy's clubs, playgrounds, social workers, etc., but leaves untouched the essential requirements of discipline and character development.<sup>15</sup>

The former teacher, now a research worker and writer, is Roy Helton. He also has expressed himself in unmistakable terms:

It is not that we do too much for our children, for we all agree that their health and education are vital responsibilities not yet fully discharged, but rather that we do permit them to do too much to us. We allow them to direct our taste in amusement, to control our time, and to determine our outlays. They compel us to insist on easy courses for them in their schools, and to badger educational authorities, not for the parental aim of better and more intensive education, but for the adolescent aim of better football teams. In short, they have so far taken over that a growing characteristic of modern life for the past twenty years has been not its youthfulness but its juvenility. . . .

An era of plain clothes for the young, an era of the divorcement of youth and gasoline, an era in which active and self-generated recreation is necessary as a prime condition, is the very beginning of a program for justice and intelligent help of our youth, in meeting the grave problems life is certain to present to them. Today we rob them of their future because we

<sup>14</sup> Edward A. Strecker, *Their Mothers' Sons*, J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia, 1946.

<sup>15</sup> Paul Mallon, *The Ease Era*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, 1945.

are too tender to deny them anything they now demand. We pity them, as we pick their pockets. We do too little for our children because we give them too much.<sup>16</sup>

Kingsley Davis, sociologist, has put it this way:

An individual's most important functions for society are performed when he is fully adult, not when he is immature. Hence, society's treatment of the child is chiefly preparatory and the evaluation of him mainly anticipatory (like a savings account). Any doctrine which views the child's needs as paramount and those of organized society as secondary is a sociological anomaly, although a personal evaluation of particular children above other ends (mainly by parents) is a normal phenomenon which fits the cultural system for socializing the young.<sup>17</sup>

The fundamental problem at issue in these conflicting points of view is that of relative responsibilities in the field of child development. How much parents and society should do for children, what they should do, when they should project themselves into the processes involved and when they should studiously withdraw from them, what status of childhood makes for its best development—these are moot questions. The answers to them cannot and should not be made arbitrarily. Some of them may be determined by scientific measuring sticks; others will come as by-products of the art of human living together. In the last analysis, child development means life, growth, development, socialization, adjustment—and these are the universals of each generation.

#### SUMMARY

1. Differences in the social acceptance of the rights of childhood, similar to those noted in the case of the child's right to life and his right to be well born, are found in contrasting the child's right to an education and the school child's right to health.

2. These contrasts suggest the existence of a lag on the part of some contemporary social movements involving the status of childhood, somewhat similar to the culture lags noted by sociological students of social change.

3. Efforts to raise the status of childhood are limited by economic capacities. The changing debt structure in the United States in recent

<sup>16</sup> Roy Helton, "Are We Doing Too Much for Our Children?" *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, November, 1940, pp. 233–234.

<sup>17</sup> Kingsley Davis, "The Child and the Social Structure," *Journal of Educational Sociology*, December, 1940, p. 217.

years is of particular significance in this connection. It has meaning both for the public maintenance of social standards of child development, and for what individual families are able to do for their children.

4. The identification and maintenance of the proper balance between those who want to do too much for children and those who want to do too little is one of the fundamental and abiding problems of child development.



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# Subject Index

- Accent, 198
- Adolescence, perennial problem of, 426, sociological theory of, 425, stage of, 411
- Adoption, and status, 320; fantasy of, 70
- Age, and ascription of status, 315; and population structure, 583; difference in siblings, 106, of teacher, 467; relationship and status, 318; spirit of an, 540
- Authority, adjustment to, 82, 83
- Behavior, child, sociological approach to, 23; meaning of, 23, situational approach to, 35; study of, 25
- Bilingual, the, as a person, 204
- Bilingualism, and child development, 209; and family relations, 207; and mental development, 202, and personal achievement, 203; and protective devices, 210; and school achievement, 203; and speech defects, 203; in United States, 200
- Birth order, 108
- Birth rate, conscious limitation of, 712; decline of, 66, 710, defined, 708; effects of war on, 652; movement to control, 712-724
- Change, cultural, and parent-child relations, 453; industrial, 14; social, and family structural forms, 64
- Child, and class nurture, 308; and status, 311; as scientific concept, 4; as welfare objective, 3; bilingual, 200, 202; contributions to family, 143; contributions to parents, 144-156; dethroned, 109; first, 108, group relations and, 6-7; in early civilizations, 603; in eighteenth century, 613; in medieval Europe, 610; in primitive societies, 599, in-between, 112; last, 115, 116; oldest, 109, 111; only, 101; rejection of parents, 442, responses in relation to parents, 418; responses in relation to peers, 420, responses to transfer problems, 417, second, 108; socialization of, 6; youngest, 115
- Child development, and bilingualism, 209; and broken families, 367; and child status, 283; and class educational pattern, 303; and domestic servants, 262; and family disruption, 370, and kinship bond, 295; and larger social setting, 520; and national characteristics, 456; and peer groups, 502; and residential mobility, 388, and school situations, 459; and setting of family life, 291; and war, 546, class differentials in, 289; concluding problems and comments, 728, problems of, among urban-dwelling children, 450; proper concern for, 740
- Child life in colonial days, 627
- Child rearing, and maintenance of class structure, 309
- Child welfare, historical development of, 666-681; in terms of social process, 684-690; interests and motives in, 681-683; movement for, 3, 663, types of activities in, 664; White House Conference on, 669, 673, 678, 680
- Childhood, defined by legislators, 587; emancipation of, 643; social crisis of, 412; social development of, 410; stages of, 410



- Children, as population element, 583; attitudes toward, 91-93; contributions to each other, 104; emerging rights of, 692; in foreign-culture homes, 433; nature of, 104, selected effects of war on, 566-578; urban-dwelling, of rural-reared parents, 448; who reject parents, 433
- Class, and variations in family structure, 290; as culture concept, 284, as factor in ascription of status, 314, concept of, 283, concepts of, and domestic servants, 273, contemporary pattern of, 286; in terms of status, 284; structure and child rearing, 309
- Class differentials, in child development, 289; in educational pattern, 303; in family attitudes, 296; in family solidarity, 302; in family structure, 290; in school activities and participation, 306; in setting of family life, 291
- Clique, the, 67, 495, 496
- Code, Children's, 670
- Colonizing, process of, 11-12
- Community, defined, 526; emphasis in study of problem children, 520; role in child development, 527; specialized types of, 535
- Conflict, cultural, between home and school, 489-491; cultural, between parents, 355; cultural and mental, 447; over religious differences, 356, problems of cultural, 438
- Cultural area, as viewed by ecologists, 528; as viewed by teacher, 529, case study of, 529
- Culture, as determinant of personality, 120; child's place in, 133; class, 130; configuration of, 127; contemporary American, 136; differences in, between school and home, 487; family place in, 133; family version of, 131; in school world, 486; meaning of, 119; national, 127, of immigrant groups, 487; regional, 129, transmission of, 136; transmission through family table talk, 171
- Culture lag, concept of, 726
- Democracy and the child, 655
- Disorganization, family, and cultural mobility, 441; increase of, in postwar years, 561; related to child care, 564
- Domestic servants, *see* Servants, domestic
- Domination, as a process, 686; revolt against, 687
- Education, child's right to, 728; pattern of, in child development, 303
- Ethos, 127
- Families, and patterns of conversation, 194; bicultural, 363; broken, 365; disgraced, 399; economic inadequacy of, 392; linguistic systems of, 192; rank order in social classes, 308, sequences to disruption of, 368; under stress, 376
- Family, the, and larger cultural system, 126; and transmission of culture, 126, 137, as structure, 53, attitude toward child, 39, 296, biological basis of, 56; conflicts within, 61; culture-transmitting function, 137; immediate form, 54, 66; kinship group form, 56; of orientation, 55; of procreation, 55; role of lodger in, 60; structural forms of, 53; war, and changes in, 548
- Family conflicts, 350, and child, 374
- Family culture, and child, 119; as part of larger culture, 126; in regional areas, 129; pattern of, 120; primary importance of, 125; selected illustrations of, 121 ff.
- Family culture patterns, meaning of, 121; of southern Italy, 121-123; of Soviet Union, 124-125; of Sweden, 123-124
- Family interaction, and domestic servants, 278; and family table talk, 167; and the guest, 239; contributions of, 78-85; general importance of, 77, law of, 145; meaning of, 73, nature of, 74; spirit of, 93
- Family life, setting of, 291
- Family meal, social nature of, 165
- Family name, 134
- Family situations, classification of, 333-334; definition of, 51; range of, 331

- Family solidarity, sense of, 302  
 Family structural forms, 53, and child, 51; significance of, 58; social change and, 64  
 Family structure, changes in, 659, class variations in, 290; effects of war on, 557  
 Favoritism, 105  
 Fertility, efforts to control, 712
- Gang, concept of, 497; importance in crime, 494  
 Gestures, 199  
 Group relations and the child, 6  
 Groups, peer, and child development, 502; as agencies of control, 504; as cultural entities, 508; as security devices, 507, as social products, 498; aspects of development, 498-502; child's experience with, 515; individual role in, 513; individuality of, 497; meaning and range of, 493; play groups as, 495  
 Guest, the, and change in family regimen, 233; and emergence of parents as adults, 253; and family conspiracy, 236; and family interaction, 239; and family learning process, 240; as cause of family conflicts, 236; as means of extending horizon of beliefs, 229; as measure of family status, 228; as medium to teach behavior, 232; as personification of pet aversions, 249; as personification of traits, 246; as practice person, 251; as preview of adult life, 258; as source of anecdotes, 237; as standard for measuring parents, 226; as stimulus to children, 234; narratives of, 226, role of, 221
- Health, child's right to, 731  
 Home, as experience-defining agency, 404; as status-defining agency, 404  
 Home life, physical basis of, 377  
 Home situations, 105  
 Homes with conflict situations, 350  
 Human nature, modifiability of, 30; plasticity of, 18  
 Humanitarianism and child, 652
- Identification, 85  
 Illegitimacy and status, 320  
 Immediate family, 54; in conflict with kinship group, 61; in relation to kinship group, 300; predominance of, 66  
 Infant, conditioning situations of, 181  
 Infanticide, 601  
 Interaction, between siblings, 96; levels of, 76; of students, 479  
 Intermarriage, 357; ethnic, 360; international, 361
- Kinship bond in child development, 295  
 Kinship group, as family unit, 56; basis of, 56; passing of, 68
- Label, linguistic, 212  
 Language, and geographical area, 190; and occupation, 189, and social class, 190; as social index, 189; levels of, 186; of enemy nations, 213; social role of, 176  
 Law of family interaction, 145-146; implications of, 147-149  
 Lodger in family life, 60
- Man, marginal, concept of, 444  
 Marriage, between ethnic groups, 360; between social classes, 362, ill advised, 550, mixed, 357; rates of, 549, separation of, 366; significance for child, 359  
 Methodology, in studying bilingual child, 204; in studying family operation, 162-164; in studying role of domestic servants, 265; in studying role of guest, 222; in studying school situations, 461  
 Mind, modern, philosophy of, 7-22  
 Mobility, and child development, 388; cultural, and family disorganization, 441; meaning for family life, 388; of school population, 478; residential, 386  
 Modes of expression, 176, family, 179; preverbal, 182  
 Mortality, infant, developments in United States, 699; eugenic signifi-

- cance of decline of, 707; movement against, 697; problem of, 695  
 Mother tongue, statistics on, 436
- National culture, 127  
 Negro, case study of cultural area, 529-535  
 Neighborhood, 524
- Occupation and language, 189  
 Order of birth and status, 318  
 Overprotection, maternal, 340, forms of, 342
- Parental interaction, background of, 85  
 Parenthood, attitude toward, 87-91, in modern world, 398  
 Parents, inadequacy of, 439, separated or divorced, 366-370; who disregard personalities of children, 345; who magnify responsibilities, 339; who quarrel, 350; who reject children, 334; with problem attitudes, 331  
 Peer groups, *see* Groups, peer  
 Peers, child's experience with, 414, culture of, 415; first contacts with, 412; responses in relation to, 420; role of, 493  
 Personality, sociological conception of, 4-5, 34  
 Plural birth and status, 319  
 Population, age structure of, 583, children as element in, 583; social significance of age structure of, 587  
 Pressures, economic, 392; undue social, 441  
 Primogeniture, 318  
 Pronunciation, 197
- Quarreling, and child, 353; as interactive process, 351
- Refugee, the as a bilingual, 217  
 Region defined, 527  
 Remarriage, 336  
 Rights, concept of, 692; differences in social acceptance of, 728, of childhood, 694  
 Rites of passage, 429; ceremonial, 428; contemporary status of, 429
- School, as creator of culture conflicts, 491; as culture-transmitting agency, 488; class pressures in, 489, life of, in retrospect, 461; population composition of, 481; pupil relations in, 477; teacher personnel in, 466  
 Science and child, 653  
 Scientific research, 16  
 Semantic situations, 183  
 Servants, domestic, and child development, 262; and child's introduction to class concepts, 273, and child's knowledge of life, 270; and childhood fears, 275; and family interaction, 278, and leisurely parenthood, 278, and sex life of children, 271; as companions for children, 266, 269; as family historians, 276; as mitigators of family harshness, 268; as mother-surrogate, 267; as personification of social type, 274; methodological note on, 265; relationship with family, 263; types of, 262; unexplored aspects of, 278  
 Setting, social, increasing importance of, 522; larger, 520, range of, 523  
 Sex, and ascription of status, 314; of teacher, 468  
 Sheppard-Towner Act, 702  
 Sibling relationships, distinctive features of, 96; educational aspects of, 99; emotional satisfactions in, 100, individuality of, 117; rivalry in, 114  
 Siblings, as substitutes for parents, 98; differences in age of, 106; differences in order of birth, 108, differences in sex of, 107  
 Situation, definition of, 35-38  
 Situational approach, implications of, 42; meaning of, 29; to behavior, 35  
 Situations, environmental, emphasis upon, 28; school, in relation to child development, 459  
 Social activities and participation in child development, 306  
 Social change and transmission of culture, 136  
 Social class, *see* Class  
 Social interaction, meaning of, 73  
 Social Security Act, 703

- Social situations, as content, 41; as process, 40; as structure, 40; three aspects of, 38
- Sociological approach to behavior problems, 23, 31
- Speech, characteristics of, 197
- Status, and linguistic identification, 219; ascription of, 7; changing, in United States, 626; factors in history of child, 617; for child, 134, historical, of childhood, 598, in terms of social process, 596; marginal, 446; meaning of, 311; of American family, 656; of colonial child, 641; of family and school children, 483; of teachers, 469; types of, 311-312
- Statuses, achieved, attainment of, 322; factors in, 323-327, general importance of, 327; meaning of, 312
- Statuses, ascribed, 312 ff.
- Stress, in family life, 376; of occupational requirements, 380
- Structure, defined, 40, family, 51
- Suburb, 536
- Table talk, and transmission of culture, 171; as form of family interaction, 167; common illustrations of, 173, in family life, 161; value of, 164
- Teacher, age of, 467; conception of behavior problems, 472; marital status of, 469; mental hygiene of, 471, personnel in school situations, 466; sex of, 468
- War, and child development, 546; and selected family changes, 548; increasing role in society, 547; recurrent role of, 546
- Weaning, social, in contemporary life, 423; process of, 422; symptoms of lack of, 424
- White House Conferences on Child Welfare, 669, 673, 678, 688

## Index of Authors

- Abbott, Grace, 609, 671, 703, 745, 761
- Ackerson, Luton, 745
- Adams, Romanzo, 745
- Adler, Alfred, 29, 80, 107, 110, 114, 116, 344, 745, 761
- Adrian, Edgar Douglas, 26, 745
- Aichhorn, August, 745
- Aldington, Richard, 234
- Allen, Frances C., 529
- Allen, Frederick, 745
- Allen, Frederick L., 397, 556, 745, 761
- Allport, F. H., 745
- Allport, Gordon, 34, 223, 745
- Anderson, Christopher, 745
- Anderson, Elin L., 288, 745
- Anderson, John E., 42, 81, 85, 180, 414, 685, 745, 750, 761
- Anderson, John P., 745
- Anderson, Nels, 129, 745, 761
- Anderson, Sherwood, 228
- Anderson, W. A., 387, 746
- Angell, R. C., 223, 539, 751, 761
- Angyal, Andras, 42, 746
- Appel, Kenneth, 758
- Areson, C. W., 683, 761
- Arlett, Ada H., 746
- Arrington, Ruth E., 141, 759
- Arsenian, Seth, 202, 203, 204, 762
- Atlas, Leopold, 368
- Aughinbaugh, William E., 229
- Baber, Ray, 746
- Bacon, Francis, 140

- Bain, Read, 456, 762  
 Baker, Harry J., 746  
 Baker, O. E., 589, 762  
 Baker, S. Josephine, 731, 746  
 Banay, Ralph S., 570, 762  
 Baring, Maurice, 280, 746  
 Barker, George C., 177  
 Barker, Roger G., 21, 746  
 Barnet, James, 368, 746  
 Barron, Milton, 358, 746  
 Baruch, Dorothy, 511, 746, 762  
 Basso, Hamilton, 210  
 Baxter, Celena A., 121, 762  
 Baylor, Edith M. H., 746  
 Bayne-Powell, Rosamond, 613, 614,  
     615, 617, 746  
 Beach, Allen W., 762  
 Beach, Walton G., 762  
 Beaglehole, Ernest, 149  
 Beck, Annie G., 421, 762  
 Becker, Howard, 74, 546, 563, 746  
 Beers, Howard W., 130, 762  
 Bell, Earl H., 7, 762  
 Bellerose, Dorothy, 102, 746  
 Benedict, Ruth, 746  
 Bernard, L. L., 33, 746, 762  
 Bernstein, Aline, 231, 746  
 Bibby, Cyril, 194  
 Bidgood, Lee, 77, 751  
 Blackey, Eileen, 762  
 Blanchard, Phyllis, 747, 762  
 Blanton, Margaret G., 103, 203, 747,  
     762  
 Blanton, Smiley, 103, 203, 747  
 Blatz, William E., 747  
 Bloodgood, Ruth, 403, 747  
 Bloomfield, Leonard, 188, 190, 747,  
     762  
 Bloss, Peter, 747  
 Blumer, Herbert, 178, 762  
 Blumgart, Leonard, 675, 762  
 Bogardus, Emory S., 119, 747  
 Boggess, Virginia, 763  
 Bohannon, E. W., 102, 763  
 Boll, Eleanor S., 61, 332, 376, 384,  
     392, 393, 399, 461, 546, 747, 763,  
     764  
 Bosanquet, Helen, 75, 76, 747  
 Bossard, James H. S., 30, 61, 212, 326,  
     332, 336, 361, 376, 384, 391, 392,  
     393, 395, 398, 399, 425, 470, 485,  
     512, 527, 528, 546, 550, 551, 552,  
     556, 559, 577, 659, 660, 663, 675,  
     738, 747, 763, 764  
 Bott, Helen, 747  
 Bouglé, Céléstin, 747  
 Brandt, Lilian, 747  
 Breckenridge, Marian E., 747  
 Bridges, Katharine M., 764  
 Bridgman, Ralph P., 675, 764  
 Bromley, Dorothy, 747  
 Bronner, Augusta F., 351, 540, 752  
 Bronner, Eva Belkin, 764  
 Brooks, E. C., 747  
 Brooks, Lee Marshall, 747, 751  
 Brown, A. R., 428, 747  
 Brown, Lawrence Guy, 52, 74, 240,  
     747, 764  
 Brunk, Christine, 764  
 Brunner, Edmund de S., 361, 523,  
     748  
 Bruno, Frank J., 764  
 Buck, Pearl, 608, 618, 748, 764  
 Buhler, Charlotte, 411, 748  
 Burdick, E. M., 764  
 Burgess, Ernest W., 25, 32, 34, 55,  
     74, 77, 134, 163, 352, 355, 356,  
     362, 379, 393, 400, 449, 529, 748,  
     756, 764, 765  
 Burlingham, Susan, 765  
 Burt, Cyril, 748  
 Calhoun, Arthur W., 627, 629, 631,  
     632, 637, 649, 656, 748  
 Carpenter, June, 765  
 Carpenter, Niles, 525, 569, 764  
 Carr, Lowell J., 522, 748  
 Carter, Isabel Gordon, 587, 765  
 Carter, John Franklin, 237, 464, 465,  
     748  
 Carter Foundation, William T., 365,  
     382, 383, 392, 472  
 Cavan, Ruth S., 393, 748  
 Chaliapin, Feodor, 230, 235  
 Chambers, Bradford, 502, 512, 765  
 Chapin, F. Stuart, 178, 748, 765  
 Chapman, Stanley, 306, 765  
 Child, Irvin L., 121, 198, 748  
 Childers, A. T., 765  
 Chrisman, Oscar, 610, 619, 748  
 Clark, S. D., 357  
 Clothier, Florence, 765  
 Cockrell, D. L., 415, 765  
 Cohen, Marion, 765

- Colcord, Joanna, 765  
 Cole, Cyrenus, 228  
 Collip, James B., 26, 748  
 Conklin, Edwin G., 28, 748  
 Cooley, Charles H., 31, 285, 748  
 Cooper, John M., 722  
 Cottrell, Leonard S., Jr., 7, 38, 311, 322, 355, 356, 362, 748, 765, 766  
 Cournos, John, 321, 464, 465  
 Cowgill, Donald O., 378, 379, 387, 748, 749  
 Coyle, Kathleen, 229  
 Crichton-Miller, Hugh, 749, 766  
 Cronin, A. J., 749  
 Crothers, Rachael, 367  
 Crouse, Russel, 754  
 Crum, Frederick, 707, 765
- Damrosch, Walter, 234  
 Dashiell, J. F., 766  
 Davis, Allison, 285, 286, 298, 311, 496, 505, 749, 766  
 Davis, Edith A., 180, 766  
 Davis, Ellen, 766  
 Davis, Kingsley, 311, 366, 369, 374, 454, 565, 742, 766  
 Day, E. J., 180, 766  
 Dealey, James Q., 749  
 De Hauranne, Duvergier, 649  
 De Porte, J. V., 766  
 Devereux, George, 456, 766  
 Dewey, John, 18, 749  
 Dewhurst, J. Frederic, 212  
 Dillon, Thelma, 764  
 Dimock, Hedley S., 749  
 Dinwiddie, Courenay, 697, 766  
 Dollard, John, 94, 245, 316, 430, 444, 749, 767  
 Doob, Leonard W., 430, 444, 749  
 Draschler, Julius, 358, 361, 749  
 Dubois, Cora, 749  
 Dummer, W. F., 68, 81, 749  
 Durant, William, 10  
 Duvall, Evelyn M., 352, 749  
 Duvall, Everett W., 767
- Earle, Alice Morse, 627, 632, 633, 635, 638, 749  
 Edin, Karl A., 749  
 Edwards, Alba M., 287  
 Edwards, Jonathan, 637  
 Edwards, Newton, 590, 592, 767
- Eisenberg, Philip, 765  
 Eliot, Ethel Augusta, 367  
 Eliot, Thomas D., 767  
 Elliott, Mabel A., 749  
 Ellis, Anne, 230  
 Ellsworth, Lincoln, 234  
 Elmer, Manuel, 749  
 Elwin, Malcolm, 749  
 English, O. Spurgeon, 750  
 Erikson, Ruk H., 767
- Fairchild, David, 234  
 Fairchild, Mildred, 124, 767  
 Falk, I. S., 707, 767  
 Falk, Myron, 567, 572, 767  
 Faris, Ellsworth, 33, 767  
 Faris, Robert, 767  
 Faust, A. B., 608  
 Feeney, Leonard, 227, 465  
 Fenton, N., 101, 102, 767  
 Field, Marshall, 567, 574  
 Figge, Margaret, 767  
 Fillmore, Eva A., 750  
 Finger, Charles, 233, 750  
 Firey, Walter, 326, 767  
 Firth, Raymond, 428, 713, 750  
 Fisher, D. C., 767  
 Fisher, H. A. L., 236  
 Fisher, Mary S., 180, 750  
 Fitz-Simons, Marian J., 767  
 Fleming, Sanford, 750  
 Flugel, J. S., 84, 750  
 Folks, Homer, 565, 668, 669, 750, 767  
 Folsom, Joseph K., 52, 121, 351, 650  
 Ford, Harriet, 367  
 Ford, Mary E. M., 757  
 Foster, J. C., 750  
 Foster, Robert, 130, 774  
 Foster, Sybil, 768  
 Frampton, M. E., 130, 761  
 Francis, Kenneth V., 750  
 Frank, Lawrence, 21, 456, 666, 768  
 Frazer, Sir James G., 319  
 Frazier, E. Franklin, 750  
 Freeman, Frank M., 756  
 Furfey, Paul H., 181, 493, 498, 499, 750, 768
- Gallagher, Ruth, 38, 765  
 Galpin, Charles J., 449, 526, 750, 758  
 Gardner, Burleigh B., 285, 286, 298, 496, 505, 749

- Gardner, Mary R., 285, 286, 298, 496, 505, 749  
 Garrison, Fielding H., 698  
 Gerhardt, William, 228  
 Gerth, H. H., 285  
 Gesell, Arnold, 409, 410, 495, 684, 750  
 Gibbon, Edward, 609  
 Gide, André, 234  
 Gilder, Jeanette, 233, 235, 751  
 Gillin, J. L., 55, 57, 524, 526, 751  
 Gillin, J. P., 55, 57, 524, 526, 751  
 Ginsberg, Ethel L., 768  
 Ginsberg, Morris, 285  
 Gluck, Paul C., 55, 59, 768  
 Glueck, Bernard, 92, 93, 768  
 Glueck, Eleanor T., 448, 538, 751  
 Glueck, Sheldon, 538, 751  
 Goldhammer, Herbert, 685, 768  
 Goodenough, F. F., 768  
 Goodsell, W., 64, 751  
 Gottemoller, R., 768  
 Gottschalk, Louis, 223, 751  
 Gracianas, U. A., 149  
 Grant, E. I., 768  
 Grant, J. R., 180, 768  
 Green, Julian, 230, 751  
 Gregory, Edward W., Jr., 77, 751  
 Grenville, Thomas N. E., 706, 772  
 Griffin, J. D. M., 747  
 Grove, Robert D., 705  
 Groves, Ernest R., 6, 27, 65, 84, 138, 162, 194, 352, 423, 456, 751, 768  
 Gruenberg, Benjamin, 751, 768  
 Gruenberg, Sidonie, 568, 570, 677, 751, 768  
 Gulick, Luther, 149  
 Gurvitch, Georges, 751  
  
 Hagood, Marguerite, 751  
 Haines, Alice R., 769  
 Hall, Calvin, 563, 768  
 Hankins, Frank, 715, 768  
 Hapgood, Norman, 230  
 Hardy, Martha C., 418, 768  
 Harriman, Margaret Case, 326  
 Harrison, Marguerite, 236, 751  
 Hart, Ella B., 751  
 Hart, Hornell, 751, 769  
 Hartshorne, B., 27, 133, 769, 771  
 Hartwell, Samuel W., 769  
 Hattwick, Bertha, 769  
  
 Hay, Louise, 769  
 Hayakawa, S. I., 184, 751  
 Hayner, Norman, 379, 752, 769  
 Healy, William, 351, 398, 439, 447, 521, 540, 752  
 Helton, Roy, 469, 558, 738, 742, 769  
 Hendrick, Ives, 28, 86, 752  
 Herbst, Esther K., 415, 776  
 Herskovitz, M. J., 769  
 Hertzler, J. O., 129, 769  
 Hewitt, Lester E., 511, 752  
 Hilgard, Josephine R., 415, 777  
 Hill, Patty Smith, 769  
 Hill, Reuben, 352, 546, 563, 746, 749  
 Himes, Norman, 713, 715, 752  
 Hohman, Leslie, 769  
 Hollingworth, Leta, 424, 752  
 Holmes, Oliver Wendell, 165, 173, 752  
 Holmes, Roy H., 769  
 Holzinger, Karl J., 756  
 Hood, Laura, 341, 769  
 Hopkins, Cornelia D., 769  
 Hopkirk, Howard W., 574, 576, 683, 761  
 Horney, Karen, 28, 419, 456, 556, 557, 752  
 Horowitz, E. L., 769  
 Hoskins, R. G., 26, 752  
 Hough, Elizabeth, 769  
 Housman, Lawrence, 230  
 Howe, M. A. De Wolfe, 238  
 Howells, William Dean, 396, 752  
 Hughes, Vivian, 227, 231, 236, 237, 752  
 Hunt, Frazier, 232, 233  
 Hunt, J. McV., 752  
 Hurlock, Elizabeth B., 410, 495, 752  
 Hurston, Zora Neale, 233  
 Hutchinson, Dorothy, 576, 752  
 Hutchinson, Edward P., 749  
  
 Ilg, Frances L., 410, 495, 750  
 Irgens, Effie Martin, 769  
 Isaacs, Susan, 752, 770  
  
 Jameson, Samuel H., 770  
 Janvier, Carmelite, 770  
 Jenkins, Richard L., 511, 752  
 Jensen, Friedrich, 750  
 Jersild, Arthur T., 352, 409, 752  
 Jespersen, Otto, 190  
 Johnson, Charles S., 770

- Johnson, James Wood, 577  
 Johnson, Owen McMahon, 367  
 Johnson, W., 208, 776  
 Jones, Arthur, 150, 752  
 Joseph, Alice, 759  
  
 Kanner, Leo, 182, 753, 770  
 Kardiner, Abram, 753  
 Karlin, Edith, 770  
 Kawin, Ethel, 753  
 Kempf, E. J., 26, 753  
 Kennedy, Margaret, 753  
 Kennedy, Raymond, 4, 770  
 Kennedy, Ruby Jo Reeves, 4, 358, 770  
 King, Charles E., 87, 770  
 Kirkpatrick, Clifford, 753  
 Kiser, Clyde V., 359, 770  
 Kluckholm, Clyde, 223, 751  
 Koshuk, Ruth, 44, 45, 753, 770  
 Koster, Donald Nelson, 368, 753  
 Kounin, Jacob S., 21, 746  
 Kretschmer, E., 753  
 Krout, Maurice H., 770  
 Krueger, E. T., 753  
 Krutch, Joseph Wood, 395  
 Krzywicki, Ludwick, 599, 753  
 Kuczynski, Robert R., 709, 753  
  
 Lagerlof, Selma, 237  
 Landis, Paul, 392, 398, 584, 589, 590,  
 753, 770  
 Landtman, Gunnar, 284  
 Lang, Olga, 455, 753  
 Lania, Leo, 236  
 Lathrop, Julia C., 674, 770  
 Latz, Leo J., 722, 753  
 Lawrence, T. E., 444  
 Laws, Gertrude, 753  
 Lawton, George, 141, 770  
 Lazareff, Helene Gordon, 570, 572  
 Leahy, Alice, 113, 753, 768, 770  
 Lecky, William G. H., 555, 753  
 Lee, Jennie, 232  
 Lehmann, Rosamond, 245, 753  
 Lennox, Elisabeth, 575  
 Lenroot, Katharine F., 574  
 Leslie, Henrietta, 362, 754  
 Leslie, Shane, 238  
 Levi, Lottie, 577, 578  
 Levin, N. P., 588, 770  
 Levy, David, 114, 340, 344, 754, 770  
 Levy, John, 770, 771  
  
 Lewenberg, Martha, 771  
 Lewis, M. M., 76, 754  
 Lind, Helen, 460, 754  
 Lind, Robert, 460, 754  
 Linder, Forrest E., 705, 754  
 Lindquist, Ruth, 754  
 Lindsay, Howard, 754  
 Linton, Ralph B., 7, 54, 133, 311, 317,  
 323, 427, 428, 586, 754, 771  
 Lippmann, Walter, 688, 754  
 Little, M. F., 180  
 Locke, Harvey J., 352, 379, 400, 748  
 Logden, George E., 771  
 Lombard, Ellen C., 677, 754  
 Long, Augustus White, 228, 461  
 Loomis, Alice M., 141, 759  
 Lorge, Irving, 523, 748  
 Lorimer, Frank, 712, 771  
 Lowie, Robert H., 596, 600, 612, 754  
 Luck, Mary G., 394, 756  
 Lumpkin, Katharine Du Pré, 771  
 Lundberg, George, 38, 40, 754  
 Lunt, Paul S., 165, 167, 286, 288,  
 483, 507, 759  
 Lynch, Hannah, 227, 754  
  
 MacCarthy, Mary, 754  
 MacFarlane, J. W., 771  
 Mackinnon, Donald W., 557  
 Malinowski, Bronislaw, 489, 771  
 Mallon, Paul, 741, 754  
 Mandershausen, Horst, 393, 754  
 Mangione, Jerre, 67, 121, 192, 207,  
 210, 438, 488, 754  
 Mangold, George B., 680, 700, 754  
 Marie, Grand Duchess of Russia, 233  
 Markus, Lauretta, 770  
 Marquand, John P., 383, 397, 755  
 Marshall, Leon C., 367, 755  
 Masters, Edgar Lee, 227, 464, 465,  
 755  
 Matthews, Brander, 462  
 Maurer, Rose, 124, 771  
 Maxwell, W. B., 235, 237  
 May, Geoffrey, 367, 755  
 May, Mark A., 27, 133, 769, 771  
 McCain, John, Jr., 130, 771  
 McCarthy, D., 180, 755, 771  
 McClenehan, Bessie H., 393, 771  
 McClure, S. B., 233  
 McCormick, William, 497, 755  
 McFarland, M., 180, 771, 777



- McKay, Henry D., 758  
 Mead, George H., 36, 37, 755  
 Mead, Margaret, 19, 63, 68, 114, 459,  
     558, 602, 755, 771  
 Meltzer, H., 395, 771  
 Melvin, Bruce, 590, 771  
 Mencken, H. L., 188  
 Menninger, Karl A., 771  
 Merriam, Charles E., 692, 694, 772  
 Merrill, Francis F., 749  
 Millar, Mara, 233  
 Miller, C. Blackburn, 231  
 Miller, Herbert A., 438, 445, 447, 755,  
     772  
 Miller, Nathan, 603, 621, 755  
 Miller, Neal E., 245, 316, 749  
 Mills, C. W., 285  
 Milnes, Nora, 755  
 Minehan, Thomas, 755  
 Miner, Horace, 130, 772  
 Monachesi, Elio D., 746  
 Montessori, Maria, 755  
 Moore, Edward R., 722  
 Moore, H. E., 129, 756  
 Moore, Madeline V., 772  
 Moriyama, Iwao, 706, 772  
 Morris, Charles, 178, 755  
 Morrison, Arthur, 755  
 Moulton, Bryant E., 772  
 Mowrer, Ernest R., 367, 372, 387, 755,  
     772  
 Mowrer, Harriet, 755, 772  
 Mueller, Franz H., 240  
 Mulhern, James, 729, 755  
 Mumford, Lewis, 9  
 Munroe, Harriet, 236  
 Murchison, Carl, 180, 756  
 Murphy, Gardner, 750, 756, 772  
 Murphy, J. Prentice, 670, 675, 737,  
     764, 772  
 Murphy, Lois Barclay, 505, 509, 510,  
     756, 772  
 Myers, Garry C., 472, 772  
 Myers, Theodors, 756  
 Myrdal, Alva, 123, 124, 756, 772  
  
 Neal, Eva, 102, 772  
 Needham, J., 26, 772  
 Neugarten, Bernice, 483, 772  
 Neumann, Frederika, 772  
 Neumann, Henry, 772  
 Newell, H. W., 773  
  
 Newman, Horatio, 756  
 Nexo, Martin A., 227  
 Nimkoff, Meyer F., 134, 284, 504,  
     527, 756, 773  
 Nollen, John S., 773  
 North, C. C., 756  
 Notestein, Frank W., 714  
  
 Odum, Howard, 129, 756  
 Ogburn, William F., 284, 352, 366,  
     504, 527, 549, 751, 773  
 Ogden, C. K., 178, 756  
 Okey, Ruth, 394, 756  
 Olin, Ida, 773  
 Orgel, Samuel Z., 476, 477, 773  
 Ormond, A. T., 73  
 Oswald, Marianne, 462, 463, 466  
  
 Park, Robert E., 25, 34, 74, 77, 134,  
     438, 443, 529, 756  
 Parmelee, Maurice, 23, 653, 756  
 Parsons, Alice Beal, 773  
 Parsons, Talcott, 7, 311, 314, 321, 773  
 Patri, Angelo, 756  
 Patten, Simon N., 651, 773  
 Patterson, S. Howard, 367, 756  
 Paulsen, Pearl, 769  
 Pavlov, I. P., 30, 47, 756  
 Payne, George Henry, 605, 607, 756  
 Pearl, Raymond, 714, 756  
 Pearson, Gerald H. J., 750  
 Peattie, Roderick, 235  
 Percy, William Alexander, 426, 756  
 Perrin, Porter G., 188  
 Petrova, Olga, 232  
 Piaget, Jean, 180, 503, 504, 757  
 Plant, James S., 83, 143, 152, 180,  
     315, 390, 391, 521, 568, 757, 773  
 Pope, Nancy, 367  
 Popenoe, Paul, 149, 757  
 Porte, J. V., 361  
 Pressey, Luella, 773  
 Preston, George H., 773  
 Preston, Ralph C., 568, 757  
 Price, Maurice, 439, 773  
 Prickett, Henry Lucien, 773  
 Puffer, J. Adams, 497, 774  
 Pupin, Michael, 235  
  
 Queen, Stuart A., 36, 774

- Radziwell, Princess Catherine, 228  
 Ranck, Katherine, 393, 748  
 Rasey, Mabel, 774  
 Reckless, Walter C., 538, 753, 757  
 Reuter, Edward B., 757  
 Rice, John Andrew, 237, 556, 757, 774  
 Rice, Stuart, 757, 774  
 Richards, Esther Loring, 757  
 Richardson, Frank H., 757  
 Rivlin, Harvey M., 476, 774  
 Roberts, Lydia J., 757  
 Roby, Maud Frothingham, 571  
 Rockwood, Lemo, 757  
 Rogers, Carl, 163, 205, 774  
 Rogers, James E., 757  
 Ross, Bertha M., 774  
 Ross, E. A., 596, 608, 685, 686, 757  
 Roucek, J. S., 444, 774  
 Rowell, H. G., 732, 733, 760  
 Rubrah, John, 697  
 Rude, Anna E., 702  
 Runner, Jessie R., 757  
  
 Sait, Una, 757  
 Sanderson, D., 130, 774  
 Sanford, Gilbert A., 87, 774  
 Sanger, Margaret, 719, 757  
 Santayana, George, 94, 187, 354, 448, 757  
 Sapir, Edward, 34, 76, 84, 177, 179, 197, 774  
 Sayles, Mary B., 757  
 Schettler, Clarence, 57, 135, 774  
 Schleich, Carl Ludwig, 463  
 Schnepf, Gerald J., 359, 774  
 Sedgwick, Henry Dwight, 463  
 Sellin, Thorsten, 448, 757  
 Sessions, Ruth Huntington, 235  
 Sewall, Mabel, 774  
 Shaw, Clifford, 164, 521, 758, 774  
 Sheffield, Ada E., 36, 40, 774  
 Sheldon, Sybil, 774  
 Sheldon, W. H., 758  
 Sherrill, Charles Hitchcock, 462  
 Shover, J., 203, 776  
 Shridharani, K., 128, 438, 758  
 Siegfried, André, 306  
 Silverman, Baruch, 774  
 Simpson, M., 758  
 Singer, Edgar A., 24  
 Skils, Edward A., 685, 768  
  
 Skinner, Edna L., 751  
 Slayter, Mary R., 775  
 Sletto, Raymond F., 775  
 Slotkun, J. S., 364, 775  
 Smalley, Ruth E., 775  
 Smith, Betty, 194, 306, 758  
 Smith, H. L., 775  
 Smith, Lady Eleanor, 462, 463, 758  
 Smith, M. E., 180, 758  
 Smith, Mapheus, 538, 757  
 Smith, William C., 336, 437, 758, 775  
 Solomon, Joseph, 568  
 Sombart, Werner, 285  
 Sorokin, Pitirim, 288, 449, 523, 539, 540, 547, 758  
 Sowers, Alice, 775  
 Spoerl, D. T., 204, 209, 775  
 Spykman, Nicholas J., 685  
 Srole, Leo, 306, 759  
 Stagner, Ross, 775  
 Stauffer, Marjorie, 775  
 Stevens, George C., 775  
 Stevens, S. S., 758  
 Stix, Regina K., 714, 775  
 Stodgill, Ralph, 775  
 Stonequist, Everett V., 443, 758, 775  
 Strang, Ruth, 180, 758  
 Strecker, Edward A., 347, 562, 741, 758, 775  
 Strong, Samuel, 198, 775  
 Sullenger, T. Earl, 367, 526, 538, 758  
 Sullivan, Harry Stack, 775  
 Sumner, William Graham, 53, 127  
 Sutherland, E. H., 383, 400, 448, 538, 759, 775  
 Sweet, Esther C., 776  
 Swenson, Sadie J., 751  
 Symonds, Percival M., 332, 334, 338, 471, 759, 776  
  
 Taft, Jessie, 338, 776  
 Tangent, Pierre, 289, 776  
 Tarde, Gabriel, 29  
 Terman, Lewis, 759  
 Thom, Douglas A., 759, 776  
 Thomas, Dorothy S., 27, 30, 33, 44, 141, 521, 759  
 Thomas, Elbert D., 394, 776  
 Thomas, W. I., 27, 30, 31, 32, 33, 44, 54, 438, 521, 759, 776  
 Thompson, Laura, 672, 759

- Thompson, Warren S., 387, 759  
 Thrasher, Frederic M., 487, 497, 498,  
 499, 500, 502, 505, 510; 514, 536,  
 759, 776  
 Thuro, Mildred B., 776  
 Thurston, Henry W., 668, 672  
 Thwaites, Reuben G., 628  
 Towle, Charlotte, 776  
 Traphagen, Virginia, 746  
 Travis, L. E., 203, 776  
 Treudley, Mary B., 403, 776  
 Tucker, W. B., 758  
 Tuckwell, Gertrude, 759  
 Turner, F. J., 645  
 Tylor, E. B., 119
- Updegraff, Ruth, 415, 776  
 Urwick, L., 149  
 Useem, John, 289, 776  
 Useem, Ruth, 289, 776
- Vamberry, Arminius, 463  
 Van Alstyne, D., 180, 759  
 Van Gennep, A., 427, 759  
 Van Paassen, Pierre, 229, 231, 759  
 Van Sickler, Florence, 576, 577  
 Van Waters, Miriam, 759  
 Vincent, E. Lee, 747  
 Von Rhode, Carl, 537, 776  
 Von Wiese, Leopold, 74, 746  
 Voss, J. Ellis, 384, 385, 759
- Wagenknecht, Edward, 759  
 Waller, Willard, 73, 90, 460, 466, 468,  
 759  
 Walworth, Dorothy, 431, 776  
 Ward, Anne, 102, 103, 776  
 Ware, Caroline, 121, 759  
 Warner, W. Lloyd, 55, 165, 167, 236,  
 238, 306, 324, 325, 483, 507, 759,  
 766, 776  
 Washburn, Ruth W., 415, 777  
 Watson, John B., 24, 760  
 Watson, Maud, 760  
 Weaver, W. Wallace, 764  
 Webster, Hutton, 319, 760
- Weill, Blanche, 108, 109, 115, 332,  
 760  
 Wembridge, Eleanor R., 760  
 Westermarck, Edward, 619, 760  
 Wharton, Edith, 59, 367, 760  
 Wheeler, Olive A., 777  
 Whelpton, P. K., 359, 770  
 White, William A., 29, 30, 760, 777  
 Whiting, John W. M., 428, 760  
 Whyte, William F., 327, 777  
 Wickes, Frances G., 760  
 Wickman, E. K., 472, 760  
 Wilden, Margaret Buell, 560  
 Wile, Ira S., 777  
 Wiley, M. M., 769  
 Willcox, Walter F., 710  
 Williams, H. M., 180, 777  
 Williams, J. H., 538, 777  
 Wilson, Margaret, 367  
 Wirth, Louis, 439, 448, 449, 760, 777  
 Witmer, Helen Leland, 774, 777  
 Wolf, Anna W. M., 571, 777  
 Wolfe, A. B., 760  
 Wood, Thomas D., 732, 733, 760  
 Woodhouse, Chase Going, 777  
 Woods, Elizabeth, 570  
 Woolley, Helen T., 760  
 Wright, Herbert F., 21, 746  
 Wright, Quincy, 547, 760  
 Wylie, I. A. R., 227
- Young, Donald, 760, 777  
 Young, Kimball, 29, 126, 127, 153,  
 524, 525, 526, 760, 777  
 Young, Pauline, 439, 761
- Zachry, Caroline, 567, 570, 761, 777  
 Zelig, Rose, 761, 777  
 Zimand, Gertrude Folks, 572, 573, 761  
 Zimmerman, Carle C., 130, 449, 523,  
 758, 761  
 Znaniecki, Florian, 31, 32, 54, 438,  
 759  
 Zorbaugh, Harvey W., 387, 761